Motor Racing Hungarian Grand Prix

Hill is robbed of victory on last lap

Alan Henry in Budapest

DAMON HILL showed the commanding form which won him the 1996 world championship when he steered his unrated Arrows-Yamaha to the verge of victory last Sunday, only to be robbed of his 22nd grand prix win by hydraulic trouble on the last lap.

But finishing second behind Jacques Villeneuve's Williams-Renault was as good as a win for the 36-year-old Briton, who drove immaculately, taking advantage of his Bridgestone tyres which worked better than the Goodyears in race temperatures of around 32C (90F).

Hill's exhibition came at a crucial time, raising his stock as the driver transfer market moves into full swing. Two races ago he was criticised by the Arrows owner Tom Walkinshaw for not justifying his $8 million retainer, but last Sunday he raised the prospects of an offer from one of the leading teams for 1998.

Hill drew on his experience to set the Arrows chassis up perfectly for the twisting Hungaroring track, where good handling and aerodynamic downforce are more important than power. Yet this was also a heartening performance for Yamaha, who have struggled this season to wring any consistency from their engine. The V10 did not miss a beat here.

That Hill might be a contender was emphasised when he qualified third behind Michael Schumacher's Ferrari and Villeneuve. At the start he dived inside the Canadian on the run to the first corner, completed the opening lap behind Schumacher and eventually overtook him at the start of the 11th lap.

"I could see that Michael had blistered his tyres and would soon be in problems," said Hill. "Eventually I passed him quite easily. Everything was going beautifully. I was able to stay ahead of Jacques and could pull out an extra advantage when I wanted to. I was thinking about winding down for the last few laps but hadn't expected to have to wind down as much as that."

Hill first knew he had problems when his throttle began to play up three laps from the finish as he nursed a half-minute lead over Villeneuve. The Arrows almost rolled to a halt on a couple of occasions as the gearbox began to malfunction. Coming out of the third turn for the final time, Villeneuve had the stricken Arrows in his sights and swooped past using the grass at the edge of the track. Amazingly Hill struggled round to finish second, still 11 seconds ahead of Johnny Herbert's Sauber-Ferrari.

"If someone asked me whether I lost a win or won a second place today," said Hill, "I must say second is a good result, but when you are running at the front and expecting a win it is a little disappointing. The throttle went on the blink completely and a few times the car just stopped, so I was really amazed to get to the end."

Villeneuve admitted he was lucky to win, but he was delighted to do so in his quest to erode Schumacher's advantage in the world drivers' championship. With six of the season's 17 races remaining, he trails Schumacher by three points.

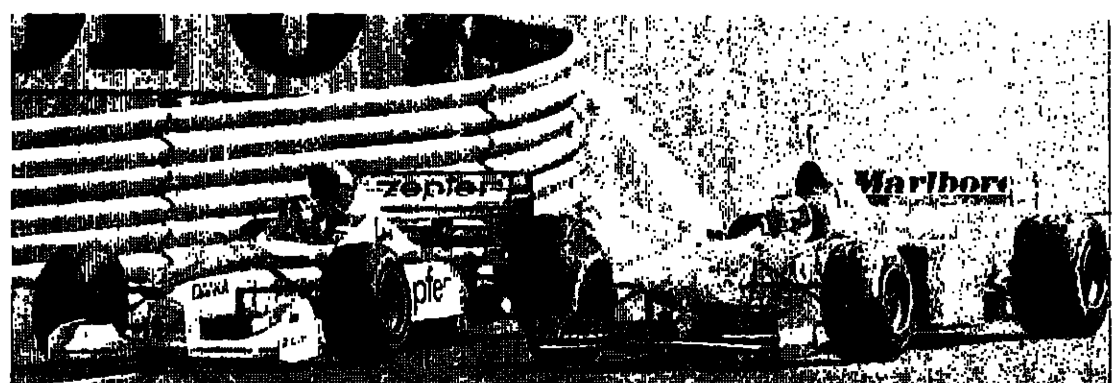
"The team warned me when Damon's lap times began to slow down so I started pushing again," Villeneuve said. "As I came towards him he started going left and right so I just went on the grass and passed him."

Schumacher finished fourth, fending off a firm challenge from his brother Ralf's Jordan-Peugeot, which crossed the line less than a second behind in fifth place.

"At the end of the race Ralf was quicker than me and if I had not been fighting for the title I could have let him past," said Schumacher. "I was hoping Hill would win because I think he deserved to and also because it would have helped me in the championship."

Eddie Irvine's hopes of sixth place ended on the final lap when his Ferrari was pushed off the road by Shinji Nakano's Prost, which inherited the final championship point of the afternoon.

Hill's success had come on the fourth anniversary of his maiden grand prix victory in a Williams on the same track, and his former employer Frank Williams was among the first to praise his drive. "Grands prix are not won by people who cruise around," said Williams. "Damon drove brilliantly."



Old rivals . . . Hill dives down the inside of Schumacher's Ferrari to take the lead PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE COOPER

Rugby Union

Springboks suffer their blackest day

Stephen Rowe in Auckland

NEW ZEALAND savaged a 14-man South Africa with a record 55-35 victory at Eden Park to continue their unbeaten run in the Tri-Nations series. They were forced to fight back from 21-11 down after a stunning opening half-hour by the world champions. But their task was made easier after Springbok flanker Andre Venter was sent off in the 47th minute.

It was New Zealand's highest score against South Africa, and their biggest winning margin against them. It was also the Springboks' biggest score against the All Blacks.

Venter was dismissed for stamping on the face of opposing captain Sean Fitzpatrick in a ruck. New Zealand were leading 29-21 when he went and proceeded to make the most of the extra space. Fitzpatrick declined to comment, but the All Blacks' coach John Hart said: "I don't think kicking has any place in the game."

South Africa, who led the All Blacks 23-7 in the opening match of the series at Ellis Park before losing 35-32, were in a similarly strong position before their opponents turned on their awesome back-line running. A strong, rolling maul in the second minute set up a try from flanker Ruben Kruger.

No 8 Gary Teichmann and centre Percy Montgomery added tries from lucky bounces off their own kicks, but the All Blacks went to the break leading 23-21 as Christian Cullen crossed for his first try. Carlos Spencer and Alama Ieremia also scored, Spencer adding 25 points with four penalties and four conversions.

Two penalties in the opening five minutes of the second half nudged the All Blacks out of reach and Venter's dismissal finished the game off. "They played right into our hands," said Hart. "We were never going to let our discipline slip. I've warned the guys about it."

Scrum-half Justin Marshall scored for the All Blacks in the 58th minute and Cullen got his second try with a brilliant run which took him through three defenders and over an attempted trip by James Small.

Flanker Taine Randell, who was outstanding, was rewarded with a try and Tana Umaga got the seventh. South Africa ended up with five tries to earn a bonus point, but after three losses they are out of contention in the series. Australia, with one win and a loss, can still match the All Blacks, but need to beat New Zealand and South Africa away from home.

Fitzpatrick, in charge of the All Blacks for the 50th time, said he was disappointed with the first half display, but added that they had fun in the second half. "We wanted to express ourselves and enjoy ourselves," he said.

Cryptic crossword by Araucaria

Across

7,11 Payment at strongpoint by half-Jewish party lamenting the Royal 5 (4,3,3,5)
8,11,16,18 down Only the native American soldier is good enough for the blonde (4,3,3,5,8,3,4)
10 Religious person reaches religious conclusion for reproduction (6)
11 See 7 and 8
12 American plc first (4)
13 Old solvers — shifts do well without them — are looking frightful (6-4)
14 Ediot about putting it in the pudding in a feeble state (11)
19 Madonna with her third change is on the point of dressing (10)
22 It's in London, like this little house (4)
23,18 3 was causing apprehension with "Goodbye", that arrangement with two notes to the melody (2,4,2,3,4)
24 Container of wine for painter in coffee-house (6)
25 First of stars in a constellation's prayed by . . . (7)
26 . . . 18 nymph, worrying Laertes for starters, I hope (7)

Down

1,17 Change 4 and 10 to a 5 in 4s, then 11 (7,7)
2 Cooked fish and meat during dessert? (8)
3 Chap in rhyme with my brown hair (6)
4 First of a few up in front of 1 (8)
5 Gershwin's beginners are Hobson's choice (6)
6 Thespians turn to fives in romances (7)
9 Everywhere where there's a railway junction? (2,3,6)
15 Giving backword: out of design I generally turn up (8)
16 See 8
17 See 1
18 See 8 and 23
20 Player in boots turned one in (6)
21 Get away from wobble especially with lily gone (6)

Last week's solution

A	C	T	I	O	N			A	B	R	I	D	G	E
T		R		S		L		S		I		U		X
H	E	A	R	T	L	E	S	S		O	R	B	I	T
E		I		E		G		U		T		L		E
I	G	L	O	O		A	D	M	I	S	S	I	O	N
S				P		T		E				N		D
T	E	S	T	A	T	E		D	E	A	L	E	R	
		H		T						S		R		
	R	I	G	H	T	S		R	E	P	O	S	E	D
C		E				P		I		A				E
R	E	L	A	T	I	O	N	S		R	E	S	I	N
E		D		R		N		I		A		T		S
W	R	I	T	E		D	E	N	I	G	R	A	T	E
E		N		A		E		G		U		I		L
L	E	G	A	T	E	E			O	S	P	R	E	Y

Football results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Barnsley 1, West Ham 2; Blackburn 1, Derby 0; Coventry City 3, Chelsea 2; Everton 1, Crystal Palace 2; Leeds 1, Arsenal 1; Leicester 1, Aston Villa 0; Newcastle 2, Sheff Wed 1; Southampton 0, Bolton 1; Tottenham 0, Man Utd 2; Wimbledon 1, Liverpool 1.
Monday: Arsenal 2, Coventry City 0.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: First Division: Birmingham 2, Stoke 0; Bradford C 2, Stockport 1; Bury 1, Reading 1; Man City 2, Portsmouth 2; Middlesbro 2, Charlton 1; Norwich 0, Wolves 2; Oxford Utd 2, Huddersfield 0; Port Vale 0, Nottm Forest 1; QPR 0, Ipswich 0; Sheff Utd 2, Sunderland 0; Swindon 2, Crewe 0; West Brom 2, Tranmere 1.

Second Division: Blackpool 1, Luton 0; Bristol Rvrs 1, Plymouth 1; Chesterfld 3, Walsall 1; Fulham 1, Wrexham 0; Gillingham 0, Preston 0; Grimsby 1, Bristol City 1; Millwall 3, Brentford 0; Northampton 0, Bournemouth 2; Oldham 3, York 1; Southend 1, Carlisle 1; Watford 1, Burnley 0; Wigan 5, Wycombe 2.

Third Division: Chester 2, Lincoln 0; Colchester 2, Darlington 1; Exeter 1, Hartlepool 1; L Orient 0, Cardiff 1; Macclesfld 2, Torquay 1; Mansfield 2, Hull 0; Notts Co 2, Rochdale 1; Peterboro 0, Scunthorpe 1; Rotherham 2, Barnet 3; Scarboro 1, Cambridge Utd 0; Shrewsbury 2, Doncaster 1; Swansea 1, Brighton 0.

Scottish Coca-Cola Cup, second round: Berwick 0, Celtic 7; Dumbarton 1, Aberdeen 6; Dundee 1, East Stirling 0; Dunfermline 5, Ayr 1; East Fife 0, Kilmarnock 2; Gr Morton 4, Airdrie 1; Hibernian 3, Alloa 1; Livingston 0, Hearts 2; Motherwell 2, Inverness CT 2; Partick 2, Stirling A 3; Queen Sth 2, Dundee U 4; Raith 5, Forfar 0; Ross Co 0, Falkirk 3; St Johnstn 3, Clyde 0; St Mirren 2, Clydebank 0.

Third-round draw: Rangers v Falkirk; St Johnstone v Celtic; Dundee Utd v Hibernian; Stirling v Kilmarnock; Dunfermline v St Mirren; Raith v Hearts; Motherwell v Gr Morton; Dundee v Aberdeen.
Ties to be played on August 19 and 20.

Scottish League Cup, first round: Stranraer 4, Arbroath 4.

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Islanders flee Montserrat volcano peril

Jeremy Lennard in St Peters

BRITAIN announced plans on Monday for a partial evacuation of the Caribbean island of Montserrat after George Foulkes, the international development minister, warned that the possibility of a "massive, cataclysmic-intensive eruption" of the Soufrière Hills volcano could no longer be ruled out.

A Royal Navy destroyer stood ready off the coast of the British dependent territory on Tuesday to assist in an evacuation of as many islanders as wish to leave. Governor Frank Savage said that Britain would pay the full fares of any islanders wishing to migrate to Britain.

About 5,000 people remain in the northern third of the island — the only part so far unaffected by the volcano's showers of rocks and ash.

"Over the past 24 hours the volcano has become much more dangerous," Mr Foulkes said. "As a result we have agreed to this voluntary partial evacuation of anyone who wants to leave."

The evacuation was expected to begin later this week after a top-level meeting of officials from the Department for International Development and the Foreign Office. United States, French and Dutch ships from other Caribbean islands would be available to help.

Scientists at the Montserrat Volcano Observatory went on the island's public radio on Monday to warn the population that the threat had increased dramatically.

"The magma dome is growing at the fastest rate ever," chief scientist Steven Sparks told listeners. "There is a very large mass of material approaching a very unstable state."

The volcano seems certain to disgorge this material, most probably in the direction of the abandoned capital, Plymouth, devastated by the volcano's fury earlier this year. But depending on the scale of the eruption, pyroclastic flows of superheated ash and grapefruit-sized "bombs" could hit areas as yet only touched by Soufrière's activity. Such pumice fragments could be hot enough to start fires.

Seemingly contradictory advice given to residents about evacuation again brings into question the Montserrat government's state of preparedness.

Meantime the feeling among locals was one of complete confusion. "I hurt in my heart," said Donald Romeo. "I don't feel there is any way to ask for truth. All we get is confusion and chaos."

Islanders are also keen to hear a commitment from the British government that even if Montserrat is evacuated, they will eventually be able to return with British assistance to rebuild a new town in the north.

When scientists warn of "massive, cataclysmic-intensive eruption" they have a history lesson in mind. The worst volcanic disaster this century was on Montserrat's neighbour, Martinique, in 1902. A smouldering 1,500m volcano called Mont Pelée exploded, wiping out the small town of St Pierre. Of its 28,000 citizens, only two survived.

Montserrat's volcano has been spewing ash for two years, but scientists say a major eruption could happen any minute

US in secret new nuclear build-up

Ed Vulliamy in Washington

THE United States is engaged in a massive secret programme to build a new generation of nuclear weapons, according to an internal US government document revealed this week.

The document, a copy of which has been passed to the Guardian, exposes Washington to accusations that the US has embarked on the design and development of new warheads using simulated detonations to evade the terms of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Among the weapons involved is the W-88 Trident missile, backbone of Britain's nuclear deterrent, which is being modernised to such an extent that the improved model will amount to a new "Trident II".

The 300-page document — obtained by a physicist formerly of the secret Los Alamos nuclear laboratory — unveils a weapons programme which is, says Matthew McKinzie, bigger than at the height of the cold war. The programme envisages growth by $4 billion a year, compared with the equivalent of $3.7 billion during the cold war.

The Stockpile Stewardship and Management Plan, nicknamed the Green Book, is an internal report compiled by the energy department, which manages and maintains the nuclear arsenal.

It was declassified and obtained by Dr McKinzie's Washington-based arms control monitoring group, the Natural Resources Defence Council, which is suing the government for breach of the test ban treaty.

"What we have is a massive nuclear programme," Dr McKinzie said, "which is a great deal larger than at the height of the cold war — which in the present security situation is staggering."

The document shows the energy department and navy secretly underpinning work on new prototypes for nuclear weapons, and on improvements to existing warheads, two of which are the W-76 and W-88 missiles, fitted to the Trident submarine.

Dr McKinzie said that the report shows the US government aiming to get round the test ban treaty by developing new weapons systems which do not need underground testing.

"The programme is trying to employ certain characteristics that five or six years ago would have needed underground testing. The question is, are these missiles supposed to be deployed without needing to be tested in that way? This is happening just as the test ban treaty is going before the Senate for ratification."

Dr McKinzie has written an analytical guide to the technically complex document, in which he says: "If implemented over the next decade as planned . . . the programme will seriously erode important non-proliferation objectives as well as undermine political assurances that the US government has provided for other nations."

Robert Bell, the director of arms control at the national security council, said last year that the effect of the test ban treaty was "to rule out opportunities to create new weapons". But the internal report talks about "the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons" and says that "laboratories are currently working on programmes to provide new or modified designs" to nuclear weapons.

The energy department said this week that the current programmes were concerned only with the modification and modernisation of existing designs. The head of the department's bomb-maintenance programme, Dr Victor Reis, said the work was "wholly consistent with the goals of the test ban treaty".

U-turn on mines, page 7

Greenpeace frozen by BP court order

Paul Brown

GREENPEACE was crippled this week after British Petroleum obtained a court order freezing its assets and demanding $2.2 million in compensation for its recent occupation of an oil rig.

The order served on the Co-operative Bank in Glasgow prevents the 65 employees of Greenpeace being paid and would enable court officials to seize Greenpeace ships or any other assets in the UK's jurisdiction. It follows a week-long occupation of a BP-chartered rig off the Shetland Islands. Four activists were arrested and taken to Aberdeen last Sunday after they left the Stena Dee rig, 180km west of Shetland.

Four senior Greenpeace staff who have been running the campaign against the expansion of the North Atlantic oilfields are named in the writ. Their personal assets will also be seized if Greenpeace does not pay.

Chris Rose, the deputy director of Greenpeace UK and one of the four named, said: "They are attempting to snuff out protest against the further expansion of fossil fuels by directly attacking the livelihoods of our 65 employees and their families. For a company that has just declared half-year profits of $2.4 billion, this is a vindictive act."

The order also named Jon Castle, captain of the MV Greenpeace, the ship involved in the action against the Stena Dee, and the campaigner Liz Pratt. The fourth person is Sarah Burton, a lawyer and campaigns director of Greenpeace.

Greenpeace is involved in a court action against the British Department of Trade and Industry and 22 oil companies, including BP, about the exploitation of the frontier oilfields of the North Atlantic.

Roddy Kennedy for BP denied on Monday that the action against Greenpeace was an attempt to snuff out that action or to cripple the organisation. "This action is merely to recompense us for the losses we have suffered as a result of their action." Mr Kennedy said the revenue of Greenpeace worldwide was $137 million last year, according to its last annual accounts, more than enough to pay off BP.

The last company to attempt to shut down Greenpeace in this way was British Nuclear Fuels in 1983, when Greenpeace blocked the Sellafield nuclear waste pipeline into the Irish Sea. The fine imposed by the High Court for breach of an injunction was paid by public subscription.

Battle of Atlantic, page 24

Austria	AS30	Malta	60c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 450	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3.000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

Work conquers all in 'culture of contentment'

I WAS enjoying immensely the letter from Paul Escobar (August 10) until I read the last paragraph and realised that he was being serious.

The last time I looked at the figures, the United States' "unrelenting productivity" produced an average GNP well behind that of Switzerland and Sweden, and outside the world's top 10. The assertion that the US assists other nations "frequently and selflessly" sits uneasily with the frequent spectacle of Washington's aggression against nations whose governments are somewhat reluctant to prostrate themselves at the feet of US capitalists.

How is "unrelenting productivity" helping the starving children of Cuba, those hapless victims of a cruel 30-year embargo? What "beneficence" has been extended to the poor, the unemployed and the homeless in that most inegalitarian of nations — the US? Or are they trying to cure poverty with Death Row?

It seems that the "Ugly American" is still very much alive and well and that lawyers have lost none of their contempt for the truth.
R Linkiewicz,
Dolans Bay, NSW, Australia

I AM glad that Paul Escobar is happy in a patriotic belief in American exceptionalism and in the view that in the Land of the Free work conquers all. Long may he remain enfolded in this comfortable "culture of contentment" as characterised by John Kenneth Galbraith. Pleasant myths don't hurt anyone, do they?

But in practice Mr Escobar's attitude is dangerous, because it is shared in large measure by American élites. Nor is the mindset confined to the US. The premise that in an allegedly free-market economy anyone can prosper through hard work is juxtaposed with the fact that there exists substantial and manifest poverty in the same society.

This leads all too easily to the convenient conclusion that the poor deserve deprivation because failure must be due to laziness. Thus welfare should only be for a very limited period and aimed at teaching those people the virtues of hard work. Mental illness, disability, youth, lack of education, illness, age and infirmity can all be ignored.

The selfishness of Social Darwinism is respectable once more. This should not be surprising when its 19th century sibling, *laissez-faire* liberalism, dominates economic thinking. The well-to-do by and large benefit from globalisation and deregulation. They sincerely believe that the trinity of unregulated capital markets, footloose multinationals and free trade makes no other course possible. Even if we wanted the welfare state, the argument goes, we can no longer afford it.

I suspect that without a communist threat, and with the Depression fading from living memory, most movers and shakers no longer see a real need for the social bargain on which the welfare state was premised. They see no pressing need to try to re-regulate capital markets, or to control generous contributors and potential employers who are in charge of multinationals. And, as even Jesus admitted, the poor are always with us. So why give a damn?
Nigel Tappin,
Dwight, Ontario, Canada

Responsibility for history

I AM impelled to respond to Norman Stone's review (Liberation fallacy unravelled, July 27). For Jews who experienced the war, and for their relatives (including myself), there can be no "effort to blame" anyone other than Hitler as the principal responsible for the Holocaust. But the most dangerous contention of the reviewer is that "most German Jews" imagined until 1938 that it would all "blow over". My parents were both seriously maltreated, bullied and finally expelled from their schools by 1935. My father was sent by his mother, a person of no great privilege or extraordinary foresight, to a school in England in the same year, and she fled to France.

Yes, the British did accept my father, but at the outbreak of war aged 18, he was interned and shipped to Australia on the infamous Duneera, suffering horrendous treatment before and during the passage. No allowance was made for the fact these Jewish refugees were obvious enemies of the Nazi regime.

Of course, hindsight colours our perspective, and we should not apportion responsibilities for unforseeable, or unavoidable harm. But, it is surely preferable to accept, and learn from, the very real responsibilities of the time — xenophobia, the political expediency of appeasement. These are not new, but regrettably still prevalent — Bosnia, Indonesia, Rwanda, etc.

I cannot express too strongly my admiration for the moral strength, honesty and overview of the vast majority of current German youth, aided by a remarkable education programme, compared with whom the knowledge and awareness of French or British youth seems lamentably lacking.

The self-satisfactory, superior tone of your reviewer is most dangerous in seeking to reinforce this blinkered, partial view of moral responsibility.
David Selig,
Les Lilas, France

WITH reference to the persistent and virulent hatred of Jews in today's Poland (Voters wary of Polish free-for-all, July 20), your readers are no doubt aware that there were 3 million Jews in Poland in 1939 and that in 1945, after the Holocaust, there remained a few tens of thousands. The current figure is 6,000, most of them elderly.
W J Harris,
Stockholm, Sweden

Fear holds the key

LIKE the UK, the United States is, and has been at least since McCarthyism, a fear-based culture sporting such heroes as Ralph Nader, on the one side, and Pat Robertson on the other (Why do we live in terror?, August 3). What is really terrifying in these cultures of fear is the simultaneous abdication of personal responsibility and the escalating demands for "protective legislation" that saws away incrementally but surely at personal freedoms.

Seatbelts and motorcycle helmets are not options of choice, of personal risk; they are prescribed by law. Even the mildest fireworks are becoming illegal. Housing projects ask tenants to forfeit their rights to protection from illegal search and seizure in order to ensure control of drug rings. We invite police into our schools to monitor students for weapons.

There are cities in which one cannot loiter on the sidewalk while smoking and one can no longer purchase lighters that are not childproof. People sue successfully for everything from environmental stress to slippery soap dishes in public toilets. And, finally, Americans are forever attempting to have morality legislated.

And we want somebody to make us safe. To do so, we are willing to turn responsibility for everything hurtful, unhealthy, uncomfortable, different and scary over to some higher power. We want codes, ordinances and laws to keep us safe not only from assault and hazardous nuclear waste but from immigrants, preservatives, TV programmes, and potholes in the road.

Unfortunately, not only does fear impede a creative life, but it also invites tyranny. Invariably, tyrants rise to power on the promise of security. And while I do not disavow the need for public safety and welfare, I do think it is important to keep in mind that freedom and safety are rarely synonymous.
C S Bryson,
Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

A LITTLE panic is appropriate and healthy in a crisis. If there really is something to worry about then Frank Furedi is encouraging complacency.
Peter Adams,
Stroud, Gloucestershire

The wrong kind of friends

TONGUE lashings against New Labour for their decision to allow the Hawks to be exported to Indonesia in your correspondence columns prompts me to point out that in New Zealand we are in an ethically even more shameful situation.

Our present coalition government supports the Indonesian regime by both taking part in joint military exercises and providing $5 million in aid. This includes military assistance which, believe it or not, includes human rights training for the armed forces, presumably in how not to torture and maim East Timorese dissidents. The taxpayer foots this bill without so much as a by your leave in our supposedly democratic country.

Our minister of foreign affairs, Don McKinnon, recently confirmed on an official visit to Jakarta that his government planned a "multi-faceted relationship" with the Suharto regime, including military co-operation. He added, almost as an aside, that some people here found "parts of Indonesia unpalatable". There are, in fact, an awful lot of us in New Zealand who feel that, and we plan legal action in the near future to deduct from our tax liability the proportion that goes towards financing a continuing genocide.
Colin Lloyd Amery,
Auckland, New Zealand

AS A former fighter/ground attack pilot, it appears to me that to claim the Hawk is merely a "trainer" is tantamount to saying that Sweeney Todd was merely a barber.
John F Kennett,
Haslemere, Surrey

Briefly

THE so called Middle East peace process has provided a smoke-screen enabling Israel to continue its brutal and illegal occupation of Palestine and parts of Syria (August 17). Let us hear less about security for the Jews and more of security and freedom for all the peoples of the Middle East.
K J Cooper,
Wellington, New Zealand

JUST before the election, a young asylum-seeker from Central Africa approached me for English classes at my adult education centre. He had recently arrived at London's Waterloo station and, unsure of what to do, had spent the night there before applying for asylum. As he did not apply on arrival, he is not eligible for benefits until he is either recognised as a refugee or removed. This could take two or three years. Without cash, he was sick, depressed and alone. Thousands more are in the same situation. After 100 days in power, the Government has yet to do anything about changing this dismal state of affairs, in spite of having originally condemned the legislation that made it possible.
Sam Mackenzie,
London

THE report (CIA comes clean over spy UFOs, August 10) which refers to "more than half of all UFO reports from the 1950s and 1960s", leaves unexplained the remaining sightings from that period. Surely that is the percentage of interest to the public, UFO-believers or not.
Margaret Webb,
Nyons, France

YOUR book reviewer Veronica Horwell (August 4) incorrectly calls cabbage omelettes "econo-miyaki", which can be rendered "fried paintings as you like them". Ionesco would have approved, but the right word is "okonomiyaki".
Tom Wenerka,
Tokyo, Japan

IN Martin Walker's article on July 13, you stated that the lower photograph was a Northrop B2 stealth bomber when in fact it is a Lockheed F117 stealth warplane. As a retired Lockheed design engineer, I was very familiar with this aircraft.
Frederick Paton,
Moorpark, California, USA

SURELY Michael Billington's article (Ireland 2, England 0, July 27) on the latest Irish play to take London by storm should have been entitled "Ireland 2, England 2". For how can England be a loser by having two such fine plays running concurrently in the capital?
Joe Banerjee,
Kyoto, Japan

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Singapore PM fights opposition in court

Nick Cumming-Bruce

SINGAPORE'S prime minister was expected to face questioning from a leading British QC this week in a defamation trial that renews controversy over the republic's political leaders' use of the courts to hammer their critics.

The Singaporean leader, Goh Chok Tong, was expected to be cross-examined by George Carman QC, retained by J B Jeyaretnam, the 71-year-old Workers' party leader, to help him fight a suit brought by Mr Goh and 10 colleagues, including the elder statesman Lee Kuan Yew, the two deputy prime ministers, his son Lee Hsien Loong and Tony Tan, and two ministers.

The suit against the opposition leader arose from an earlier battle that the ruling People's Action party leaders fought with another Workers' party member, Tang Liang Hong. They accused him of being a dangerous Chinese chauvinist. He called them liars and filed two police reports. They sued and were awarded more than $5.5 million damages.

The case hinges on a remark by Mr Jeyaretnam at the end of a rally on the eve of Singapore's election in January that was also attended by Mr Tang. "And finally," said Mr Jeyaretnam, "Mr Tang Liang Hong has just placed before me two reports he has made to the police against, you know, Mr Goh Chok Tong and his team." Mr Jeyaretnam made no further reference to the police reports. Mr Goh and his colleagues charge that this remark was slanderous, that he must have known it would be reported in the media and so he should pay aggravated damages.

Mr Goh has brought in another prominent Queen's Counsel from London, Tom Shields, also a specialist in libel, to act for him.


Eye of the tiger . . . Singapore's opposition Workers' party leader, J B Jeyaretnam, with George Carman QC during a break from the slander case PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN PRYKE

Expectations of an epic courtroom battle, and perhaps the kind of tough questioning Singapore's leaders rarely encounter, has scores queuing for a seat in the tiny court.

"Do you still want your half million," Mr Jeyaretnam called across to Mr Goh at the end of the opening day of the trial on Monday, in a reference to the damages he might face if he loses. "Well, if you want to pay me," replied Mr Goh, shaking the proffered hand.

The 11 cases against Mr Jeyaretnam will be heard consecutively over the next 10 days, but Mr Goh's, expected to last until Friday, is the test case expected to determine the findings in the others. Mr Jeyaretnam is all too aware that opposition figures have never won any major legal battles against the government.

Amnesty International, which has sent the Canadian judge Paul Bentley as an observer, said it was concerned by reports that the Singapore government "has used civil defamation suits against political opponents in a manner that violates their right to freely hold and peacefully express their convictions".

Mr Carman doubted that any court could find Mr Jeyaretnam's comment defamatory. "It's an attempt to put a sinister construction on innocent words," he protested. "The inference is illegitimate, flimsy and ill-conceived."

Not so, countered Mr Shields. "This is a classic innuendo situation," he argued. Mr Tang, in numerous public speeches and interviews, had accused the prime minister and his colleagues of fabricating lies against him and, in effect, criminal defamation and criminal conspiracy. Mr Jeyaretnam knew there was no basis for such allegations and also knew the implication of his remarks, Mr Shields said.

Comment, page 12

Violence rocks Mombasa

Manoah Esipisu in Mombasa

THE BODIES of two missing policemen were found on Monday south of Kenya's port of Mombasa and two civilians were slashed to death, taking the death toll from six days of violence in the area to at least 35.

Police in the Indian Ocean city, already holding several opposition supporters, arrested a well-known activist in President Daniel arap Moi's ruling party.

As fears grew for Kenya's vital tourism season, an opposition-backed alliance demanding political reforms blamed Mr Moi's advisers for stoking the violence around Mombasa.

Witnesses said a priest and a vigilante were killed in the poor Mishimoroni district on the edge of Mombasa by a band of attackers who cut them to death with machetes.

Hospital sources said the bodies of two policemen were in a mortuary at Msambweni hospital in Kwale district, the site of a police hunt for attackers south of Mombasa last week. Nine police officers are now known to have died in the violence.

The coast police chief, Francis Gichuki, said police had arrested Emmanuel Maitha, a former Mombasa councillor for Mr Moi's Kenya African National Union (Kanu). Mr Maitha and a number of youths linked to him were held for questioning. Mr Gichuki said they were among 33 people arrested on Monday, bringing the number of arrests to 102 since the violence erupted on August 13.

"The situation has calmed down a little bit . . . Our officers are still in the forest searching for these criminals," he told reporters.

Security sources said Mr Maitha is linked to the Coast Protective Group, which seeks to keep coastal land for local people. The sources said he was being investigated in connection with attacks on non-coastal Kenyan settlers.

Sixteen suspects among 69 people arrested since Wednesday last week were charged in Mombasa magistrates' court on Monday with possessing weapons, including bows and arrows but no guns.

Legal sources said the fact they were not charged with murder suggested they were not ring-leaders.

Mr Moi has blamed the trouble on opposition leaders fanning tribal hatred ahead of polls. The opposition responded by accusing government hardliners of exploiting ethnic tensions.

The National Convention Executive Council (NCEC), an opposition-backed alliance calling for reforms ahead of the elections, blamed Mr Moi's advisers for stoking the violence. — *Reuters*

Milosevic pledges fair elections

Jonathan Steele

IN A fresh attempt to improve his image, President Slobodan Milosevic has invited international observers to monitor the fairness of next month's elections in Serbia.

Although former Yugoslavia was suspended from the Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 1992 because of its support for the Bosnian Serbs' war, the Serb strongman now wants to invite the OSCE to observe the poll.

He has also ordered the state television company to guarantee equal access to all candidates and parties running in the September 21 election for a new parliament and president.

Weeks of demonstrations rocked the country last year after municipal elections which the opposition coalition said were stolen by fraud. There were no OSCE monitors during the voting but, under pressure, Mr Milosevic invited an OSCE team to check the results a month later. It confirmed the opposition's claims to have won Belgrade and 13 other cities, and Mr Milosevic eventually backed down.

By inviting international observers from the start this year, he hopes to prove Serbia is democratic.

Although most sanctions against former Yugoslavia were lifted after the Dayton peace accords on Bosnia, the United States and the European Union preserved an "outer wall" of measures, including exclusion of membership of international organisations, until Belgrade meets several targets on human rights and democratic reforms.

The US special envoy, Richard Holbrooke, told Mr Milosevic this month that "over the long term, the international community's support will be determined by democratic conditions in Serbia".

The agreement provides equal broadcast time for candidates and says that news bulletins should give "impartial information".

Karen Coleman in Sarajevo adds: Two Bosnian Muslims were shot dead last week by unknown gunmen who ambushed their vehicle near a former front line with the Bosnian Serbs, authorities said.

The shooting took place near the eastern village of Laze, 8km north of Sapna along the half-kilometre demilitarised boundary between the Muslim and Croat Federation and the Bosnian Serb republic. Laze was a Serb village during the war, but was handed over to the federation as the Dayton Peace Agreement was being drawn up.

In a separate development, the Bosnian Serbs agreed to comply with new rules under which the special police will be supervised by the Nato-led Stabilisation Force (S-For) and treated as a military force. They will not be permitted to protect indicted war criminals, which means that the forces providing security to the indicted former Bosnian leader, Radovan Karadzic, will no longer be able to do so legally.

The Week

MORE than six countries, including India and, it is believed, China, have admitted to manufacturing chemical weapons secretly, three months after the ratification of an international treaty banning them.

US, Japanese and South Korean officials took part in a groundbreaking ceremony for a nuclear plant in North Korea that will see arch rivals Pyongyang and Seoul work together.

NORTH Korea's prolonged drought is so severe that harvests could be as little as one-eighth the normal size, increasing the country's need for food aid, a Red Cross official said after a 10-day tour of relief centres in the country.

THREE Burmese democracy leaders, all related to opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, were each sentenced to 10 years in prison under national security laws.

TIMOTHY McVeigh was sentenced to death for the Oklahoma City bombing after a judge in Denver imposed the jury-sanctioned verdict.

IRAQ restarted pumping crude oil into an Iraqi-Turkish pipeline for a second six-month period under a deal approved by the United Nations, according to the Turkish energy ministry.

STRONG winds and high water killed at least 25 people, toppled houses and flooded towns as Typhoon Winnie slammed into Taiwan and China's eastern province of Zhejiang.

ALBANIANS who looted weapons from barracks after violence and lawlessness hit the Balkan country in March have been ordered to hand them in by the end of next month. Those who fail to obey face up to five years in prison.

A COMPUTER failure aboard Mir sent the Russian space station spinning out of control, forcing engineers to shut all but vital life-support systems.
Washington Post, page 13

THREE thousand protesters descended on a police station in New York City to demonstrate against the alleged torture and sodomy of a Haitian immigrant.
Washington Post, page 14

IRAN'S president, Mohammad Khatami, urged Iraq to release Iranians captured during the 1980-88 war between the two countries.

NUSRAT Fateh Ali Khan, the Pakistani singer who brought Sufi devotional music to the West, has died in London.
Obituary, page 24

Aborigines winning land struggle

OPINION
Chistopher Zinn

FOR Noel Pearson it is a unique opportunity for Australians to sort out their land disputes with Aborigines and avoid decades of legal action, protests and conflict.

The young black lawyer from remote Cape York is one of his people's most articulate advocates of the concept of native title, which recognises the common law rights in land of indigenous Australians. Native title was first recognised by the high court in 1992.

Since the justices' "Mabo" decision then, and their "Wik" decision last year, the political landscape surrounding Australia's controversial treatment of Aborigines has been completely redrawn.

Mr Pearson puts it simply: Aborigines no longer have to rely on the largess of non-indigenous people because they have rights to the most important element of their culture, their land.

"Native title is a turning point in our history, as important as the day the tall ships arrived on these shores [1788]," he said. "Australians living today were not responsible for the shameful events of the past. But we are responsible for what happens today."

The federal government is about to introduce a 213-page bill into parliament, which its critics claim will extinguish many of the rights of Aborigines to co-exist on grazing land with pastoralists.

The issue is as vexed as it is complicated and the devil is in the detail. But a powerful coalition of white Australians is beginning to mobilise public opinion to defeat prime minister John Howard's 10-point plan on Wik, named after the tribe which brought the action.

There was much celebration in 1993 when the Labour government passed the historic Native Title Act. It overturned Captain Cook's colonial perception of an uninhabited continent or *terra nullius* and recognised the rights in land of Aborigines.

There were safeguards. Native title could be claimed only by people with a lasting connection to their land and could not displace privately-owned homes, property or freehold farms. But the later Wik decision found title may continue on land subject to pastoral lease, which covers about 40 per cent of the country's arid interior. The split-bench decision said if there was a conflict between the rights of the pastoralist and the native title holders the farmer's claim should prevail.

Support for Aborigines is more visible countrywide than in the heyday of the anti-bicentenary demonstrations of 1988. Last week people crammed into Tasmania's parliament to hear the state government formally apologise for breaking up families, and in Queensland the first agreement between a native title claimant and local government was signed.

But there is a long way to go. Mr Pearson says there is support for native title in the middle-class heartland that gave Mr Howard his landslide victory in March 1996. But he admits that many traditional Labour voters have yet to be convinced.

Skull's return, page 8

Kohl seeks rebate from EU

Ian Traynor in Hamburg

CHANCELLOR Helmut Kohl threw his weight behind Germany's strengthening campaign to claw billions of dollars back from Brussels for the first time last weekend, pledging to scale down Bonn's net contribution to the European Union budget.

In a television interview, Mr Kohl joined the past month's chorus of cross-party calls demanding Brussels budget reform and insisting Germany is paying way beyond its means in shouldering the bulk of the EU's finances.

"The current payment level from Germany is too high, that's undisputed. We must work to bring down this sum," Mr Kohl said.

In terms of net contributions to the Brussels budget — the amount a member state pays minus what it receives back from the EU — Germany is by far the biggest paymaster. It puts in, depending on the calculation method, 60-80 per cent of the total, or much more than the rest of the EU combined.

The finance minister, Theo Waigel, is calling for a reorganisation of EU finances from 1999, saving Germany more than $3.2 billion a year.

But the European Commission's blueprint for the years ahead, Agenda-2000, makes no provision for a re-ordering of the payments system. It was the publication of Agenda-2000 last month that incensed Bonn and the governments of the 16 federal states, which launched an increasingly vocal campaign for change. Bonn has long been unhappy about its oversized contribution, a burden it considers unjust, given the huge costs of unification.

Mr Kohl's endorsement of the reform calls also reflects the fact that his government is languishing miserably in opinion polls a year before the next general election while locked in a public finance crisis and struggling to make the grade for the single European currency. Demanding money back from Brussels is seen as an easy, populist way of appeasing euroscepticism in Germany.

Edmund Stoiber, the Bavarian prime minister who also faces crucial state elections next year and who has been loudest on the EU budget row, repeated his calls for a cut in Germany's contributions last weekend. "Reunification and the payment of billions to Russia mean enormous special burdens for us that no other country has," he said. "That's why we should pay less net to Brussels in the future."

Mr Waigel warned last week that Germany would continue its present level of payments until 1999, but no longer. "It's not right that one state alone, Germany, provides 60 per cent of the EU expenditure. That's not good for Europe."

Politicians warn that the funding row is fuelling hostility to the EU.

But while Mr Kohl joined Mr Stoiber in backing cuts to the EU coffers, the men remained at loggerheads about the the single currency and about when and on what terms it should be introduced.

Unabashed by government calls for a closing of ranks on the euro issue, Mr Stoiber fleshed out his opposition to the euro's 1999 launch, calling for a two-year delay. He is the biggest eurosceptic in the government camp.

Mr Kohl meanwhile clung to his dream of seeing the euro introduced on schedule, but was deliberately vague on the detail of the economic data warranting inclusion in the single currency club.



Sharp reminder: A young Cambodian refugee clings to a locked gate in the town of O'Smach on the Thai border, the last bastion of royalist resistance with more than 15,000 fighters and civilians. Hun Sen's government troops are pushing to within 6km of the enclave and expect to take it soon. Thailand has strung razor wire along the border to prevent a flood of refugees PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LONGSTREATH

Lang lashes out at Europe 'rump' treaty

Paul Webster in Paris

A REVOLT against the Amsterdam European Union treaty is being led by Jack Lang, the most powerful foreign affairs spokesman in the French national assembly, who said this week that MPs in other European countries were also ready to reject an agreement that abandoned great European ideals.

In an outburst that will be seen as an attack on President Jacques Chirac and the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, the main architects of EU political accords, Mr Lang said he would not ratify the June accord unless there were rapid moves towards a European federation.

Mr Lang, a senior Socialist party official and chairman of the national assembly foreign affairs commission, described the Amsterdam agreement as a rump treaty, which would lead to the continent's intellectual, economic and diplomatic decline.

Mr Lang, a former cultural minister, did not refer directly to the Socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospin, who appears to have been surprised by the outburst. But there was implicit criticism that Mr Jospin backed down on his objections to the treaty, despite a head-on clash with Mr Chirac and Mr Kohl before the Amsterdam summit.

National parliaments must ratify the accord, an updating of the Maastricht treaty, which opens the way to membership of eastern European countries and approves budgetary constraints linked to monetary union. MPs close to Mr Lang are understood to be lobbying strongly against a parliamentary Yes vote and have been in contact with MPs in other countries.

"The way chosen at Amsterdam is no good, neither in vision nor method," he wrote in Le Monde. "We have simply stopped up holes in a ship without a captain, a motor or a course."

Mr Lang said EU enlargement should be opposed until there is a complete revision of the system.

Israel snubs King Hussein's plea to lift blockade

Julian Borger in Jerusalem

THE Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, last week spurned an appeal from King Hussein of Jordan to lift Israel's blockade of the Palestinian territories — a clear sign that a United States peace mission has so far failed to break the Middle East deadlock.

After a summit meeting at King Hussein's summer palace at Aqaba, on the Red Sea, Mr Netanyahu said there would be no further lifting of sanctions until the Palestinians took more action against alleged Islamic extremists, whom Israel suspects of being behind a bomb attack last month in Jerusalem.

Mr Netanyahu, buoyed by polls suggesting Israelis have been impressed by his hardline approach, said he had information that Palestinian militants were "planning additional terrorist attacks as we speak".

His refusal to end the blockade (estimated to cost the Palestinian economy more than $9 million a day) was a setback for the US envoy, Dennis Ross, who was seeking Israeli concessions after organising several trilateral meetings between Israeli and Palestinian security chiefs, umpired by agents from the CIA.

Palestinian officials say Israel must lift its embargo before they will agree to co-operation on security, which the US sees as a precondition for the launch of a fresh initiative by the secretary of state, Madeleine Albright.

Since Mr Ross's arrival, Israel has loosened its stranglehold on Palestinian-run areas, but most Palestinians are still barred from leaving their home towns.

Israel has presented the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, with a list of 230 Islamic militants, mostly members of Hamas, whom it wants arrested or handed over to Israeli authorities.

The Palestinians say they are neither able nor willing to carry out mass internment without proof. It is still not known who organised the bomb attack on a Jerusalem market that killed 16 people, including two unidentified suicide bombers.

Mr Netanyahu said: "We don't have their identity. We can't pinpoint if they came from abroad. But if they did, they were assisted by a local organisation."

Ms Albright said last week Israel-Palestinian talks made headway on security issues but "we have to see results" from Mr Arafat.

Acknowledging his lack of progress, King Hussein said: "I did not expect that this meeting would resolve problems in a dramatic way."

Mr Netanyahu offered his hosts some consolation, once referring to the Palestinians as "partners" and offering to negotiate with them on the construction of Jewish settlements in Arab areas.

But Mr Netanyahu again refused to halt construction work on the Jewish settlement of Har Homa in Arab East Jerusalem, despite appeals from international mediators.

The Oslo peace accords commit the Israelis and Palestinians to resolving the issues of Jewish settlements and other key points of contention at "final status" talks which have yet to begin. The US initiative proposes to accelerate those talks once security co-operation has been resumed.

● An Israeli court last week imposed eight-month jail sentences on two border policemen who were filmed brutalising Palestinian detainees last year, but an Israeli human rights report said Arab civilians were still beaten "almost routinely" by the security forces.

Sombre note struck as India rejoices

Suzanne Goldenberg in New Delhi

INDIA marched into its second half-century of independent statehood on Thursday last week with the frail veterans of the struggle for freedom from British colonial rule joining the torchbearers of the next millennium in an evening procession.

It started as a trickle, a silent and bedraggled band of teachers dwarfed by India Gate in New Delhi, that symbol of imperial triumph which opens on to a vast lawn and the imposing sandstone blocks that house the presidential palace — once the viceregal mansion — and the civil service.

The marchers waved small flags in the orange, white and green of the Indian tricolour. Behind them came peasants, their heads swathed in turbans, their feet in ill-fitting shoes.

The prime minister, I K Gujral, and the president, K R Narayanan, struck a sombre note, saying that the hopes and idealism of the past had been squandered.

India had reason to be proud of its parliamentary democracy, but "corruption is corroding the vitals of our politics and our society", Mr Narayanan said. "The traditional cultural and spiritual values which have been the mainstay of our civilisation seem to be losing their grip over society and politics. Sheer opportunism and valueless power politics have taken over the place of principles and idealism."

He also lamented the rise in violence, a development illustrated last week when suspected separatist guerrillas in the northeastern state of Assam chose to mark the anniversary in bloody fashion. Seven people were killed and eight injured when a bomb exploded on a train.

In his address later in the day the prime minister called for a renewal of the freedom struggle after a gap of 50 years — the aim, this time, to stamp out corruption.

Ever since Jawaharlal Nehru, the first leader of independent India, unfurled the orange, white and green tricolour of the infant state at daybreak on August 15, 1947, prime ministers have given an annual address from the ramparts of the Red Fort, the Mughal citadel that has been a symbol of Indian sovereignty since the 17th century.

Mr Gujral's golden jubilee address was harder-edged than the usual fare at such occasions. He called for a *satyagraha* — a struggle of truth, with which Mahatma Gandhi led a mass freedom movement for 30 years — to end corruption.

"We can deal with external aggression and war very easily. But people who take bribes want to destroy the country from within and they are the greater danger," Mr Gujral said. "I want to warn them, if they think corruption is a fundamental right they are mistaken."

Although he was lucid on the evils of corruption, Mr Gujral was less clear on a remedy. He invited all citizens to tell him personally if members of his cabinet were corrupt. "My government will not spare these corrupt people. But I want all of you to join me."

He exhorted them to sacrifice immediate gain to buck the system. "Let us all resolve that no matter the delay or the inconveniences, we won't take bribes," Mr Gujral said. "They should take satyagraha like Gandhi did in his lifetime."

Mr Gujral's frank assessment of corruption was the most striking element of his address, along with an admission that elected politics had been infiltrated by criminals.

But he also promised, as anticipated, to make primary education a reality for every Indian child, though he did not say how the government would pay for it.

He said gender testing of foetuses would be banned and inducements given to parents to ensure they educate girls. Mr Gujral lamented the failure of political parties to bring more women into public life, although his own colleagues were among those who blocked a plan to reserve 33 per cent of parliamentary seats for female candidates.

His focus on the disappointments of the last half-century was in tune with the ambivalence shown by the élite towards India's 50th birthday.

In Pakistan, the celebrations for the shared 50th birthday started 24 hours earlier with a late-night session of parliament in Islamabad, starting one minute after midnight. In a candid admission of Pakistan's failings, the prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, said the country remained poor and illiterate, and riven by sectarian conflict.

Pakistan's current financial crisis prompted the government to forgo lavish celebrations in favour of solemn ceremony. But the notion that Pakistanis had sunk into despondency as they contemplated a state that has spent half its years under military dictators, and where corruption is rife, was partially dispelled as people danced out of their homes and into the streets.

In the afternoon, Mr Sharif and the president, Farooq Leghari, paid homage to Pakistan's *Quaid-e-Azam*, or great guide, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, visiting his tomb in Karachi.

Mr Sharif made an impromptu appeal against the corruption that overshadowed festivities in both India and Pakistan. "By the grace of God, Pakistan will shine on the map of the world," Mr Sharif said. "Will you help me eradicate all the ills and evils from the nation, respond with enthusiasm to my suggestion to do away with corruption, injustice, bribery and sectarianism?"

Vikram Dodd adds: A Labour party MP has called on the British government to consider issuing an apology for the 1919 Amritsar massacre, which is threatening to overshadow the Queen's visit to India in October.

Keith Vaz, chairman of the Indo-British parliamentary group and private secretary to the Attorney-General, said there was a strong case for an apology for the killing of hundreds of civilians by British troops in the Punjabi city. His remarks follow a warning from India's prime minister that the Queen should scrap plans to visit Amritsar as part of the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of Indian independence.

Comment, page 12



Hopes high for peace in Georgia

James Meek in Moscow

THE Georgian president, Eduard Shevardnadze, made a vow of peace last week with the separatist leader whose troops nearly killed him four years ago, raising hopes of an end to one of the bloodiest post-Soviet conflicts, the struggle for the Black Sea paradise of Abkhazia.

Almost a decade after he criss-crossed the northern hemisphere helping to end the cold war as the Soviet foreign minister, Mr Shevardnadze's unexpected meeting with his former enemy, Vladislav Ardzinba, in the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, gave cause to believe he might now achieve the harder task of bringing peace to his Caucasian homeland.

After two days of talks, joined by the Russian foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov, the leaders said many differences remained, but that they would not be resolved by bloodshed. As Mr Shevardnadze made clear, the breakthrough was not in a settlement but in the fact that he and Mr Ardzinba had defied the suspicion of their peoples, and their personal pride by agreeing to meet face to face. When they first met last week, they embraced.

"This is a major political event which has overcome a very complicated and difficult psychological barrier," said Mr Shevardnadze.



The Tbilisi meeting is a climb-down by both leaders. For Mr Shevardnadze, it is tacit acknowledgement that Georgia has no chance of recovering Abkhazia by force; for Mr Ardzinba, acceptance that Moscow will never sacrifice good relations with Georgia for an independent Abkhazia.

Abkhazia, a lush region of tea plantations and citrus groves between Caucasian peaks and Black Sea beaches, was to the Soviet Union what the Italian Riviera is to Western Europe.

It was no coincidence that the talks were held on the fifth anniversary of the outbreak of war in 1992. About 10,000 people were killed and 150,000 ethnic Georgians made refugees. Mr Shevardnadze himself barely escaped the Abkhaz capital, Sukhumi, in 1993 as Georgian forces fled before the final Abkhaz assault.

The conflict has been a disaster for all involved. Trying to enforce control over Abkhazia, Georgia instead lost thousands of lives and half its coastline and had to cope with a flood of displaced people.

Having driven the Georgians from the region, the Abkhazians inherited a country in ruins, its resorts derelict and its fruit rotting under economic blockade. Mr Ardzinba's demands for recognition of Abkhazian independence have been ignored by the world.

Russia, too, is desperate to end a conflict it once helped sustain by supplying the Abkhazians with weapons and allowing Chechen guerrillas to help their fellow-separatists against the Georgians. All that Moscow gained was a handful of impotent military bases in Georgia: it lost its main link with Georgia, the railway running through Abkhazia — obliging Tbilisi to turn towards Turkey and the West for its trade — and encouraged the Chechens to believe separatist revolts could succeed.



President Shevardnadze, right, and Abkhaz leader Vladimir Ardzinba take a break during their meeting in Tbilisi PHOTO: PESO FEZGRASHVILI

Until last week's declaration there had been fears the Georgian army or militants, egged on by bitter refugees, might try to take back at least part of Abkhazia by force. The trigger for this, it was thought, would be the departure from the Gali district of Abkhazia of Russian peacekeepers, whose presence in the buffer zone alongside a 100-strong detachment of United Nations observers is one of the conditions of the fragile truce that has held since 1994.

A statement signed by the two leaders said that the Georgian government and the Abkhazian leadership agreed "to take upon themselves the obligation not to use arms to resolve differences between them and under no circumstances to allow a resumption of bloodshed . . . Only peaceful political methods through negotiations should be used".

Huge obstacles remain in the way of a final peace deal. Mr Ardzinba insists on virtually reinventing Georgia as a confederation of two equal states, while Tbilisi and President Boris Yeltsin believe Abkhazia should be satisfied with a high degree of autonomy.

The biggest problem is the return of the refugees. There have been signs that Mr Ardzinba might be prepared to give up the Gali district, where many of the ethnic Georgians lived, in exchange for peace, but this would leave tens of thousands still unable to return safely to other parts of Abkhazia.

Warlords carve up Tajik economy

Karl Maier in Dushanbe

WITH his soft eyes and chubby young face, Colonel Makmoud Khudaberdiyev hardly looks the part as a central Asian warlord. Yet the colonel, aged 32, has been at the centre of the latest round of violence that exploded last week in the mountainous state of Tajikistan among a handful of army commanders nominally loyal to the embattled government of President Imamali Rakhmanov. Economic spoils are the main goal of Tajikistan's warlord businessmen.

Last week a combined force of the presidential guard and interior ministry troops recaptured Tajikistan's main foreign exchange earner, the aluminium smelter at Turzunzade, about 65km west of the capital, Dushanbe.

The smelter, which has changed hands repeatedly in recent years, had been held by Col Khudaberdiyev's troops since January. The presidential guard troops also captured a strategic mountain pass from them, pressing home their offensive.

The army warlords have been jockeying for position since June 27, when President Rakhmanov signed a United Nations-mediated peace accord in Moscow with Said Abdullohi Nuri's mainly Islamic United Tajik Opposition (UTO) movement. The agreement ended five years of civil war that erupted a year after Tajikistan gained independence in 1991 and cost up to 50,000 lives.

The UTO has remained on the sidelines in the latest clashes, although it is the planned return of opposition leaders and fighters that has prompted the pro-government commanders to intensify their contest for power.

The Moscow peace deal calls for the establishment of a commission for national reconciliation, with 13 seats given to each side, that will in theory oversee the integration of the opposing armies and lead the country into elections next year.

Critics object that the deal simply divides up the spoils between the two sides. This view was bolstered last month when President Rakhmanov wrote to the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, and requested, among other things, 26 Mercedes cars for commission members.

Not surprisingly, some of the more independent army commanders, such as Col Khudaberdiyev, feel left out. "What they have done in Moscow is create the conditions not of peace but of war, and it will be worse than anything central Asia has ever seen," he said at his brigade headquarters outside the southern town of Kurgun Tyube. "There are 100 commanders in the opposition and 100 on the government side who want ministries. The cake is too small, and those who want part of it too many."

Ironically, much of the national economic cake was in Col Khudaberdiyev's hands until the loss of the aluminium smelter. A decorated Soviet officer in the Afghanistan war, the colonel has fashioned his 2,000-troop armoured brigade — commanded mainly by Russian, Ukrainian and Uzbek officers — into what many analysts consider to be the best fighting unit in the Tajikistan army. He runs the southern province of Khatlon as a fiefdom, controlling much of the lucrative cotton trade.

Throughout this country of 5.7 million people, the UTO and army commanders have built up personal militias, easily recruited when the average wage is about $5 per month, and are engaged in illicit activities ranging from opium-trafficking to black-market trading.

Full-scale fighting erupted in the Tajik capital, Dushanbe, this month when troops loyal to Sukhrob Kasimov, an interior ministry commander, defeated militias controlled by Yakub Salimov, a customs official, former interior minister and ally of Col Khudaberdiyev.

When he dispatched his troops towards Dushanbe to support Mr Salimov, Col Khudaberdiyev found his way blocked by units of the presidential guard, despite his official position as the guard's deputy commander.

While the government has declared the situation under control, President Rakhmanov has emerged from the crisis looking weaker than ever, unable to control his most senior commanders.

Gypsies seek paradise in Canada

Kate Connolly in Prague

THOUSANDS of Czech Romanies are selling their belongings and considering a new life in Canada after a television programme depicted it as the undiscovered land of opportunity waiting to embrace them.

The Canadian embassies in Prague and Vienna have been besieged with calls since the Romanies mistakenly supposed that Canada had established an asylum scheme for them.

The programme, broadcast by the station Nova TV, has been accused of a "propaganda approach" in offering Romany families an attractive life away from the Czech Republic, where they are often the target of violent racial attacks and treated as scapegoats for much petty crime.

Na Vlastni Oci (Through Your Eyes) focused on four Czech Romany families enjoying picnics, learning to drive and visiting the Niagara Falls. They all said their new lives were easy and trouble-free, and that they were experiencing racial equality for the first time.

One scene showed a grandmother speaking on the telephone to her relatives in Ostrava region, urging them: "You won't be persecuted here like in the Czech Republic. You will have a good life. Come over here."

In Ostrava alone, 5,000 Romanies are reported to be packing their bags. Municipal magistrates in many towns, eager to be rid of their "problem citizens", have been giving them the 17,500 crowns ($500) needed for a plane ticket. Some are said to be paying the airlines direct.

"We're only helping our fellow citizens fulfil their wishes," said Liana Janackova, the mayor of Marianske Hory. "What can be wrong with that?"

The airlines report record sales for flights from Prague to Toronto, and many flights are said to be booked up until the end of September.

The programme and the consequent exodus have prompted a fierce debate about the country's treatment of its 200,000 Romanies. "The Czech Republic should not shift its problems on to others," said Pavel Bratinka, the minister for minority issues.

President Vaclav Havel's office has criticised the programme. The prime minister, Vaclav Klaus, speaking on radio, urged Romanies to think again about emigrating, saying he would not expect Canada to accept them.

The telephones at the Canadian embassy have not stopped ringing since the documentary was broadcast.

"This is an abuse of the Canadian refugee law," said Lucia Cermakova, its spokeswoman. "These applicants are all claiming they are victims of racism. We realise that there is a certain amount of racism in Czech society, but this attitude does not have government backing."

Canada had 189 Czech asylum applications last year. So far this year it has had 419. About 2,000 Czech Romanies are believed to have settled in Canada.

Clinton backs global ban on land-mines

THE United States on Monday made a spectacular about-turn on months of polemic to throw its weight behind Canada's efforts to secure a global ban on anti-personnel land-mines, reports *Ed Vulliamy from Washington*.

President Clinton said the government would, after all, send a delegation to the assembly in Ottawa, due to ratify a treaty securing the ban.

Throughout Canada's painstaking gathering of support for the treaty, the US had remained opposed, arguing that it left insufficient room for exceptions demanded by US military commanders.

The US preferred to operate through the UN conference on disarmament in Geneva — which agreed in May 1996 to limit the use of mines, but stopped short of a ban, and at which Washington thought there would be more leeway.

But White House officials have conceded privately that the Geneva conference has made no progress, while the groundswell of opinion against land-mines has been irresistible internationally and at home.

Princess Diana's high-profile visits to Angola and Bosnia have received rapt attention from US prime-time television, and evoked some hapless stuttering from officials in the Clinton administration trying to justify the US position against the princess's efforts.

This month, the Vietnam Veterans of America Association and Human Rights Watch caused even greater embarrassment by revealing internal Pentagon documents which showed that most of the land-mines that had blown up US servicemen in Korea and Vietnam had been made in the US, and that most victims of land-mines were American. Thousands of US soldiers were killed or maimed as they retreated across minefields they had laid themselves, or by US mines which had been captured or re-assembled by North Korean and Vietcong soldiers.

The revelations demolished the declared view of military commanders that land-mines were essential to the protection of US forces.

In a terse statement on Monday, Mr Clinton said: "The United States will participate in the Ottawa process negotiations on a treaty banning anti-personnel land-mines."

After the president's statement, a state department spokesman, James Rubin, said the US would be looking in Ottawa for a "geographical exception" to the global ban, maintaining its minefields in Korea, because of the "high state of alert and that there is always the risk of an attack from North Korea".

Anxious to play down the move, a White House official said: "We have decided that we want to shift some of our effort to the Ottawa process, and work on both, simultaneously."

The ultimate goal, he said, was "a comprehensive global treaty. The only way to do that is through the UN conference on disarmament, but these are very slow processes".

Canada's invitation for countries to rally in Ottawa and sign a treaty was a result of impatience with the stalemate at Geneva, and has won the support of more than 100 countries.

US officials have estimated that 9,600 people are killed every year by uncleared mines and another 14,000 wounded.

US and UK top arms sales

Ed Vulliamy in Washington

THE United States and Britain increased their shares of the world arms market in the past year, despite their governments' claim to be adopting a moral lead in foreign policy. France and Russia, the other two big arms exporters, both decreased their share.

The annual arms survey by the Congressional Research Service in Washington, published last weekend, shows the world arms market expanded last year for the first time in many years, up 5 per cent to $31.8 billion in weapons sales, after steadily shrinking since the cold war.

Britain's dubious promotion from fourth to second biggest weapons' merchant — announced earlier this year — comes as the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, is promising overseas policies based on humanitarian ethics. With $14.8 billion worth of trade, Britain comfortably overtook France and nosed ahead of Russia, which tumbled into fourth place.

The US also increased its already giant global share to 35.5 per cent — $11.3 billion worth of trade — while Madeleine Albright, the secretary of state, is pledging the US to put a new emphasis on post-cold war humanitarian priorities.

Arms exports from the US are likely to be further boosted in the coming year by the Clinton administration's announcement this month that long-standing restrictions on the sale of advanced weapon systems to Latin American countries — imposed because of human rights concerns — will be lifted.

The US figure is, of course, much lower than during the height of the cold war and after the Gulf war, when the US was selling weapons worth more than $20 billion. But the report suggests there is still big business in upgrading and maintaining weapons sold during the cold war.

The results of the survey drew sharp criticism of the Clinton administration from human rights and peace groups last weekend. The director for the Centre for Defence Information, retired Admiral Eugene Carrol, said the Clinton administration was still intent on putting traditional interests before global stability.

The arms trade, however, said US exports were judicious and responsible. "The US continues to be among the most conservative arms exporters," said Joel Johnson, vice-president of the Aerospace Industries Association. "If it were an open market and these were refrigerators, we'd have 70 per cent of the market."

Russia's drop was due to the collapse of most of the traditional Soviet markets other than China, the report says. Although China emerged in the 1980s as an arms exporter to developing countries, it remains a big weapons purchaser, mostly from Russia.

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Home Office to keep an eye on covert operators

CIVIL LIBERTIES campaigners welcomed a new Home Office code of practice designed to prevent covert police "bug-and-burgle" operations from invading the privacy of people's homes and offices. Only the Liberal Democrats voiced reservations.

The Home Office minister, Alun Michael, said there had been 2,350 covert bugging operations by police and Customs last year to obtain evidence against those involved in serious crime, including drug traffickers. Such tactics, he said, were necessary because "the public need to be protected from nasty and dangerous people".

The initial authorisation of an "intrusive" surveillance operation will remain the responsibility of a chief constable. But if it involves bugging a home, office or hotel bedroom, or if it could affect legal, journalistic or confidential personal information — including counselling by doctors or priests — prior approval will have to be sought from a judicial commissioner.

About six commissioners will be appointed later this year from the ranks of serving and retired High Court judges. But the Liberal Democrats' home affairs spokesman, Lord Rodgers, complained that a mere handful of commissioners would be unable to cope with the demand, and he called for circuit judges also to be empowered to vet operations.

Lord Rodgers also complained about the provision which, in "urgent cases", will allow chief constables to proceed without the prior approval of a commissioner (though approval is supposed to be obtained as soon as possible afterwards). "We believe that bugging in itself should be an exceptional act," he said, "used only as a last resort, and only where prior judicial authorisation has been secured."

THE SAME minister found himself trying to strike an equally hard — if not impossible — balance when he announced guidelines for the Government's new paedophile register. Under this legislation serious sex offenders will have to notify police whenever they move house.

Police will, in turn, judge if it is necessary to disclose the identities of offenders to teachers, employers, or the wider public. By stopping short of allowing full public access to the register, the Government hopes to protect children without prompting vigilante attacks on paedophiles.

The register's main weakness is that it will include only 6,000 of the 110,000 convicted paedophiles in England and Wales — those convicted or serving their sentences after September 1. And there is nothing to stop a child molester from going outside his home area to offend again.

AN INTERNAL inquiry by the Labour party into the suicide of its MP for Paisley South, Gordon McMaster, caused all manner of skeletons to come tumbling from the Old Labour cupboard in Scotland. Mr McMaster's suicide note named a neighbouring MP, Tommy Graham, and former deputy chief whip, Don (now Lord) Dixon, whom he accused of conducting a whispering campaign about his sexuality and alcoholism.

The chief whip, Nick Brown, who is conducting the inquiry, was presented with a dossier from Irene Adams, MP for Paisley North and a friend of Mr McMaster, alleging attempts by Mr Graham to oust her as an MP when his own seat came under threat from boundary changes.

She went on to allege that Mr Graham and his friend Paul Mack — also named in the suicide note — tried to pack the local party with bogus members in an attempt to have her and Mr McMaster deselected, so that the two could take over their seats.

Mr Graham is expected to be suspended from the party this week.

A RETIRED Surrey carpenter, Szymon Serafinowicz, the first man to appear in a British court accused of Nazi war crimes, has died at the age of 86. He was suffering from Alzheimer's disease and had been in hospital for the past two months with heart problems and cancer.

Serafinowicz appeared at the Old Bailey last year to face three specimen charges of involvement in the murders of 3,000 Jews on the Eastern Front in the 1940s. But a jury decided he was mentally unfit to face trial, and the case against him collapsed.

The abandoned action was estimated to have cost £4 million. The Crown Prosecution Service says that four other alleged war criminals living in England and Wales are still being considered for prosecution, but that no decision is imminent.

LONDON is on course for a Great Flood that could wreak havoc on buildings, the Tube and telephone lines, according to a group of researchers. They say that water trapped under the capital's clay bedrock for 10,000 years is rising by 3 metres a year because of a decline in industries such as brewing, which once extracted groundwater.

Insurers and businesses were warned that water would start to seep into basements and flood rain tunnels within five years unless boreholes were sunk to pump it to the surface in key locations.





Yagan's skull is exhumed after a 10-year campaign to return it to his homeland PHOTO JULIAN HAMILTON

Aborigine leader's skull to be handed back

THE head of Yagan, a 19th century Aborigine leader, was exhumed from a Liverpool graveyard last week when the Home Office granted an excavation licence after a tribal plea to Tony Blair following a 10-year campaign for its return.

The identity of the skull, brought to England by a bounty hunter in 1833, will now be confirmed by experts at Liverpool Museum, who will be looking for a bullet hole in the back. An Aborigine delegation is expected to arrive to reclaim it.

The skull of the warrior, who fought settlers in western Australia, was loaned to Liverpool City Museum in 1884, but was buried in 1964 when it began to decompose.

According to Aborigine beliefs, his spirit will be freed once his head is reunited with his body in his homeland. Somebody in the future will then receive his spirit.

Test for ovarian cancer offers lifeline for women

Chris Mihill

SCIENTISTS last week hailed new tests that could save thousands of women from Britain's fourth most deadly female cancer, dubbed the silent killer.

The tests against ovarian cancer, currently almost impossible to detect at a treatable stage, could pave the way for a mass national screening programme.

"If we could offer screening to pick up the cancer at an early stage we could quite dramatically improve survival rates," said one of the researchers.

No screening programme exists, and most women are unaware they are developing the cancer, which causes no symptoms in the early stages. Less than a third of patients survive for five years after diagnosis.

Researchers have been trying for 10 years to develop ways of screening for the cancer at an early, treatable stage.

Last week scientists from the Cancer Research Campaign outlined two studies to look at the effectiveness of screening techniques, which could become routine within 10 years if the tests are successful, alongside screening for breast and cervical cancer.

In a study to start in November, some 3,000 women are to be recruited who are at high risk of the cancer because of family history. They will be given annual check-ups, using ultrasound to measure the size of the ovaries, and blood tests to pick up a protein that is produced by ovarian tumours.

The trial will run for five years, and scientists hope to refine the accuracy of the tests so that they could be applied to the general population. At present, the tests are only 85 per cent accurate, which means that many women would be told they had ovarian cancer when in fact they were healthy.

A second and much larger study is also beginning, aimed at a wider group of some 120,000 women, which will run for seven years.

Half will receive no screening and the others blood tests for the tumour protein, followed by ultrasound if levels of the protein are raised.

Each year some 6,000 women in Britain are diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and 4,000 die.

Dr Ian Jacobs, from St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, who is helping organise both studies, said: "Currently even with the best surgery and the best chemotherapy, long-term survival rates for ovarian cancer are still poor. But if we can pick the cancer up early, survival rates are good."

Dr Jacobs added: "If we can show over the next seven or so years that the tests save lives, ovarian cancer screening might be offered alongside cervical and breast screening."

Dr James Mackay, of the CRC's human genetics group in Cambridge, said the study in the family history group could provide powerful evidence of the lifesaving benefits of screening, because the women were at much higher risk than the general population.

"No one has ever tried widespread screening on this high-risk population before and we are hopeful that it will save lives," he said.

Council guilty of racial bias

A COUNCIL serving one of Britain's most ethnically mixed populations has been found guilty of racial discrimination against seven staff, most of whom were unfairly selected for redundancy, *writes James Meikle.*

The local government union Unison last week demanded a "root and branch investigation" by the Commission for Racial Equality of the social services department at Brent borough council, north London, after an industrial tribunal suggested a flawed selection process was used "to remove black staff who were considered to be difficult".

The union said a "race discrimination time-bomb" had exploded and claimed that total compensation could exceed £150,000. A hearing to set the levels has still to be fixed.

The council, Conservative-controlled at the time of the redundancies but now run by Labour, may appeal.

In a separate case this year, an employment appeal tribunal ruled that the black head of a children's home in the borough had been unfairly sacked. She has since died.

The latest ruling follows challenges by eight Unison members, seven of them black, against decisions made as the council sought to restructure children's services.

In the competition for posts under the new set-up, staff were interviewed, completed a written exercise and were appraised. Many, including whites, boycotted the process but were appraised anyway.

The only white person selected for redundancy was a team leader who supported black rights and was openly critical of the system.

Police chief calls for special courts to beef up war on drugs

Duncan Campbell

ONE OF Britain's most senior police officers has called for the introduction of drugs courts to counter what he sees as a lack of political will and a failing government drugs strategy.

He predicts that if a new policy is not adopted, legalisation and regulation on the same lines as alcohol will have to be considered.

The comments by Michael O'Byrne, Chief Constable of Bedfordshire, which appeared in an article in the Guardian on Monday, come within a week of calls by backbench Labour MPs for a royal commission to look at the possible decriminalisation of cannabis and as the Government seeks a "drugs tsar" to co-ordinate its policies.

Mr O'Byrne suggests that the current strategy is failing: "If we continue to do only what we do already, we are not likely to contain, never mind reduce, the amount of drug taking." He asks if there is political will behind the rhetoric.

He argues that education and treatment are essential if demand for drugs is to be reduced. But he says that treatment centres are now "low on the budget list". He also deplores how little research there is on what forms of treatment work.

"We must move away from the current situation with its rag-bag of schemes grabbed from goodness-knows-where (usually America) implemented by a variety of agencies with differing levels of expertise," Mr O'Byrne said.

Of the current way the law is applied, he said: "The low probability of arrests, and the fact that the initial response is only to caution, has effectively decriminalised the use of drugs." This, he suggests, should change so that drug-taking is regarded as a criminal activity.

To deal with this, he recommends the setting up of drugs courts where judges and magistrates have an in-depth knowledge of the drugs scene and the range of options for dealing with offenders.

Mr O'Byrne suggests there should be a presumption that anyone in possession of more than a certain quantity of drugs was a trafficker. The onus would be on defendants to prove that they were not involved in trafficking.

The Home Office minister with responsibility for drugs, George Howarth, responded on Monday by saying that the "best principles" of American drugs courts, which involve the treatment and subsequent testing of offenders, would be introduced into the UK next year.

Fears mount of big squeeze on coal

Guardian Reporters

MORE than half Britain's surviving 23 deep coal mines could be closed in the next couple of years, industry sources warned this week, after the company that owns most of the privatised coal industry announced it was abandoning attempts to save the country's most modern mine.

The decision by RJB Mining to shut the Asfordby superpit in Leicestershire was put down to "adverse geological conditions", but mining union officials said they believed it was the prelude to a further sharp contraction of the coal industry.

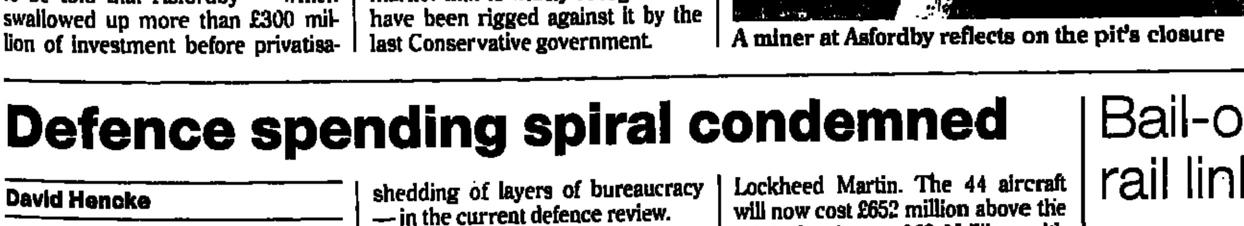
The Government now faces growing demands to take action to prevent what could prove to be the end of an industry that once employed a million workers — there are now 9,000 — and even in 1990 provided 80 per cent of the fuel for Britain's electricity supply.

Union officials were called in by RJB managers on Monday morning to be told that Asfordby — which swallowed up more than £300 million of investment before privatisation, and £40 million since — would be closed with the loss of nearly 500 jobs. RJB, which owns 17 of the remaining collieries, is understood to have pulled out under City pressure.

The decision follows flooding and the loss of millions of pounds of equipment last week. An RJB spokesman said that most miners would be offered transfers to other RJB pits in Yorkshire or the Midlands, but that a "small number of redundancies" was likely.

Coal is being squeezed on all sides — by the accelerating "dash for gas" for power generation, a flood of imports cheapened by sterling's strength, and tightening controls on power station emissions — and faces a further onslaught when RJB's contracts with privatised power generators run out in March.

With many gas stations now coming on stream, and further plants planned, most forecasters believe coal's share could be as little as 15 per cent by 2000, unless the Government intervenes to protect coal in a market that is widely recognised to have been rigged against it by the last Conservative government.



A miner at Asfordby reflects on the pit's closure PHOTO SEAN SMITH

Defence spending spiral condemned

David Hencke

A DAMNING indictment of the Ministry of Defence's failure to contain a £1.4 billion cost increase in the £10 billion-a-year military procurement budget was published last week by the National Audit Office, Parliament's financial watchdog.

The report came only two weeks after the Defence Secretary, George Robertson, promised a vigorous examination of military procurement practices. The ministry hinted that the report's findings could lead to radical changes — including the shedding of layers of bureaucracy — in the current defence review.

The report into the 25 most expensive defence projects — from Trident to the Eurofighter and Westland helicopters — lists a catalogue of delays and cost rises. One project, the Cobra weapon-locating radar, under development for Britain, France and Germany, is now expected to be more than eight years late in entering service.

The biggest increase is in the EH101 Merlin helicopter contract, built by GKN Westland, Augusta of Italy, and the American-owned Lockheed Martin. The 44 aircraft will now cost £652 million above the original estimate of £3.6 billion, with delivery five years behind schedule, partly because two prototype aircraft crashed. The Royal Navy will now get black boxes and emergency lighting in the helicopters.

The NAO also disclosed the parlous state of Britain's amphibious warfare fleet caused by delays in replacing the assault ships, HMS Intrepid and HMS Fearless. Effectively, this means that Britain is no longer capable of assembling a Falklands-style armada.

Guards told to grin and (synthetically) bear it

BEARSKIN helmets, emblems of British military valour since the Battle of Waterloo, are on the brink of extinction thanks to an animal-loving defence minister, *writes John Ezard.*

Lord Gilbert, the minister for defence procurement, has asked the five Guards regiments urgently to explore the possibility of wearing synthetic helmets.

The peril of this is that synthetic long-haired fur gets bedraggled and spiky in the rain, one official said. The risk was that guardsmen would look "like punks who have just stepped out of the shower".

For the aboriginal Canadians who cull the black bears, the move would be "another blow to the traditional life and culture they deeply value", according to the Canadian embassy in London. "They have already protested about this to Europe many times. Black bears are not an endangered species in Canada," a spokesman said.

Lord Gilbert's wife, Jean, is a member of the fund-raising committee of the Worldwide Fund for Nature. As a Labour defence minister 20 years ago, he secured a ban on using sperm whale oil as a lubricant for pilots' gloves.

Bail-out for rail link plan

Keith Harper

THE Government is set to bail out the developers of the £3.4 billion Channel Tunnel rail link and solve a funding crisis on the project, due to start next year.

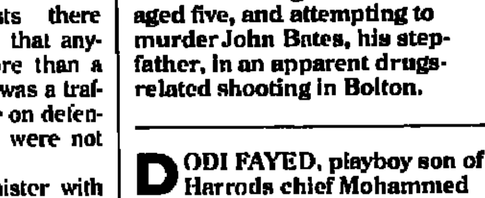
London and Continental Railways (LCR) has already been promised a £1.4 billion subsidy of public money, and pledged to put in £2 billion itself as part of the agreement with the Department of Transport. But it has so far failed to raise sufficient capital, raising concerns about the scheme's future.

Now the department may allow the company to sell government-owned land at King's Cross and Stratford, east London, to save the project — effectively increasing vastly public funding of the scheme.

About 35 acres of development land to the north of King's Cross and 120 acres at Stratford could be sold at lucrative prices so long as the money is spent to fund the rail link.

Estimates suggest the project will provide 50,000 jobs and £500 million worth of business.

In Brief



PAUL SEDDON, aged 26, of Bolton, has been charged with murdering Dillon Hull, aged five, and attempting to murder John Bates, his stepfather, in an apparent drugs-related shooting in Bolton.

DODI FAYED, playboy son of Harrods chief Mohammed Al Fayed, dismissed claims by Californian model Kelly Fisher that he was engaged to her when he went on a yachting holiday with Diana, Princess of Wales.

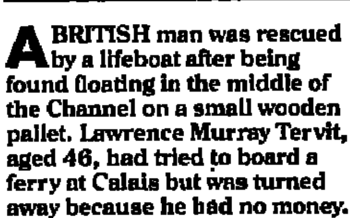
THE FRENCH magistrate leading the investigation into the rape and murder of schoolgirl Caroline Dickinson on a school trip to Brittany last summer has been taken off the case.

ISRAELI police are searching for a driver who shot dead a British hitch-hiker, Max Hunter, aged 22, and wounded his girlfriend, Charlotte Gibb, aged 20.

MINISTERS have agreed to review the case of a man denied asylum who survived a flight from India while clinging to the landing gear of a jumbo jet in temperatures of -60C.

ONE of six foreign priests on whose behalf Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott intervened after they were denied entry to Britain, has been granted a visa. The priests, from Africa and Asia but studying at a Belgian university, were seeking work experience on a cultural exchange.

CAMELOT, the National Lottery organiser, is to appeal after losing a court battle to ban a numbers game run by three of the largest bookmakers.



A BRITISH man was rescued by a lifeboat after being found floating in the middle of the Channel on a small wooden pallet. Lawrence Murray Tervit, aged 46, had tried to board a ferry at Calais but was turned away because he had no money.

THE premature death of the Gulf war veteran Paul Carr, aged 30, led to renewed calls for the Government to investigate the effects of vaccinations given to soldiers in the conflict.

POLICE in the Northeast launched a major investigation to find hundreds of former children's home residents after allegations of sexual abuse against care workers spanning 20 years.

A 10-MONTH battle by British truckers to win French government compensation over last year's French lorry drivers' strike has ground to a halt.

DANCERS in English National Ballet's Swan Lake have been banned from sunbathing for fear that they will look more like lobsters than swans.

Baccalaureate set to replace A level exams

Donald MacLeod

A LEVELS, seen for decades as the gold standard of education, will be phased out by the Government to give young people the broader education demanded by employers.

Last week more than 200,000 candidates were told the results that determine their future at university or work, but ministers and civil servants are already drawing up plans to replace the examination with a baccalaureate-type of curriculum covering a wider range of subjects and incorporating vocational courses.

Ministers are split on whether to move rapidly to a French-style baccalaureate or retain the A level name and over the next five years extend the number of subjects taken by sixth form and college students from three to four or five in line with Scottish Highers. In either case traditional A levels will be phased out from 1999.

Changes are expected to be linked to the revision of the national curriculum for 2000. The Secondary Heads Association backed reform but warned it could cost an extra £600 million in more staff, training and equipment.

Schools and universities are waiting to see the details of the Government's consultation paper in the autumn for indications of how radical the changes will be. Advocates of a baccalaureate are optimistic as David Milliband, co-author of a think-tank paper, the British Baccalaureate, is a key Downing Street adviser. "He will give it the odd prod," said one observer. Baroness Blackstone, the education and employment minister, and her deputy, Kim Howells, are also known to favour radical change. She has said she wants to build on the proposals for the 16-19 curriculum put forward by Sir Ron Dearing, who was prevented from reforming A levels by the previous government.

Lady Blackstone's decision to postpone the limited Dearing changes to A levels and throw open the debate has raised expectations of change. The overwhelming response to the Dearing inquiry from the education world and business was for change, although there was disagreement about the direction.

The same responses this time will find a government more ready to act and armed with an unassailable majority. Labour's enthusiasm was made clear in last year's education policy document, Aiming Higher, which endorsed the international baccalaureate.

The leverage of the independent schools lobby was crucial in preserving A levels under the Thatcher and Major governments. It has lost influence but the attitude of universities will be all-important in determining whether the proposed overarching qualification has any credibility.

Students in scramble for places

THE SCRAMBLE for university and college places went into overdrive this week as more than 200,000 students received their A level grades, with more applicants than ever before chasing fewer places, *writes Donald MacLeod*.

Good A levels and Highers results meant nearly two out of three available places were filled by students achieving the required grades before the clearing system even started. The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (Ucas) said 190,335 applicants were placed immediately, a jump of 33,000 compared with the same time last year.

Faced with tuition fees of £1,000 a year from 1998, 40 per cent more students than last year have made late applications to clearing. Tony Higgins, Ucas chief executive, has warned that fewer than usual are likely to take a gap year. "If everyone decided to stay in the system this year, that could be more than universities could cope with and we could see people who might otherwise have found a place not doing so," he said.

The number of 18-year-olds in the population is higher than for some time but places in higher education have remained frozen.



Good grades . . . Fiona Chow, of Knutsford high school, Cheshire, celebrates her A level results with a friend while trying to reach her father by phone to tell him the news PHOTOGRAPH: DON McPHEE

An increasing number of young people who have done General National Vocational Qualifications are also aiming for university and college, alongside mature students.

The Government's U-turn last week to exempt some gap year students from paying fees clarified the position for 19,000 applicants who have agreed deferred places for 1998. But there is evidence that fewer young people will take a year out. Scottish universities have been handling calls since Highers results came two weeks ago. They have reported a rush of applications from 17-year-olds who have completed Highers and have decided to go straight to university instead of studying for a further year in the sixth form.

Universities are using the Internet to help with the clearing process, but Viv Thom, education adviser at Sheffield Hallam university, said the Internet service was still in its infancy. "Most clearing is done over the telephone, and that will still be the case this year," she said.

Out-of-work figures hit 17-year low

Richard Thomas

UNEMPLOYMENT plunged to a 17-year low last month, prompting Opposition attacks on the Government's welfare-to-work scheme as a waste of taxpayers' money.

With the number of people out of work and claiming benefit dropping by 49,800 to 1,550,000 in July — the lowest level since September 1980 — shadow ministers tried to grab the credit for transforming the labour market.

David Willetts, Tory spokesman on education and employment, said: "The unemployment figures are further evidence of the healthy state in which we left the economy. Our policies have been getting people off welfare and into work without having to spend billions of pounds on ill-targeted programmes."

But the Government and trade unions insisted that young people and the long-term unemployed still needed extra help.

The education and employment minister, Baroness Blackstone, brushed off criticisms of the £5 billion New Deal schemes. She said: "One in five people unemployed for six months or more is under 25. It is clear the New Deal has a crucial role to play in giving these young people the skills and experience they need to get jobs."

The Government also drew some comfort on the inflation front, after a jump in the retail price index last week, with signs that wage pressures remain subdued despite the low jobless figures.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said pay rises averaged 4.25 per cent over the year to July — unchanged on the previous month — although the jobless total is now 1.4 million below its peak during the last recession.

Along with a forecast from the Bank of England that the economy is on course to hit the 2.5 per cent target for retail price inflation, the benign pay data underlined City hopes that interest rates are on hold despite the tightening jobs market.

John Sheppard, chief economist at Yamaichi International, said: "As long as there is an absence of wage pressure, the extent to which unemployment is falling is not going to be of concern to the markets."

The Bank of England said the rise in base rates from 6 to 7 per cent since the election was sufficient to cool down the economy, although its economists are still worried about the effects of the building society windfall handouts on long-term spending patterns.



TV debate fails to bridge Ulster's great divide

David Sharrock

THEY were talks, but not as we know them. No handshake between the protagonists, the Ulster Unionist Ken Maginnis and Sinn Feiner Martin McGuinness. It was the first time Unionist leader had met Republican standard-bearer on British television, and a sparky encounter it was.

Ken wasted no time in going for the jugular: 232 people had been killed in his constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone, and here he was sitting down in a BBC studio with "the godfather of godfathers".

It wouldn't happen anywhere else in Western democracy. He shook his head. Martin grinned back. He was delighted to be sharing a table with Ken.

Ken was courageous, as was his party leader David Trimble in going to South Africa with Sinn Feiners to learn about conflict resolution. Back to Ken and his favourite theme. Come the all-party talks on September 15, "we are certainly not going to sit at the table with terrorists".

Then why, asked Gavin Esler on Newsnight, are you prepared to sit down with "the godfather of godfathers" now? "I felt it was wrong to let the IRA come on air unchallenged." In 1972, Martin talked to Willie Whitelaw and rejected peace talks. By then the IRA had already killed 238 people.

"Martin McGuinness has presided over these killings . . ." Martin said the worst he had been in trouble for in the North was a fine for "an altercation with a British soldier". Ken reminded him that he had served time twice in the Irish republic for IRA membership, rose to officer commanding the IRA's Northern Command in 1976 and three years later was its chief of staff. Martin carried on smiling: "I have already rejected those allegations."

The first deaths of the Troubles in Derry were caused by the British army. "We've had 27 years of that, let's put the recriminations to one side, let's look to the future."

Ken agreed it was time to move on. "I've told you what I know about Martin McGuinness. I wonder if he is interested in democratic politics . . . If he now tells me that he now accepts the principle of consent, then we can examine the consequences of it."

Martin said he wanted Ken to recognise that the Northern Ireland state had failed everybody. "The best thing we could do is go from here into a side room and talk about our fears."

Ken said: "We haven't heard a single solitary commitment from the IRA . . ." Martin smiled back: "The IRA aren't at the table, Ken."

Martin again tried to inveigle Ken into that side room, and he was very encouraged. "No, I'm not encouraged and I didn't expect to be encouraged," said Ken. "The answer is that if Martin McGuinness cannot give a straight answer to one question tonight . . ." But he was out of time. Beaten by the clock.

"Let's continue the discussion Ken," said the smiling Martin.

● Two IRA prisoners were released early by the Irish government last week in a resumption of the policy operated during the last ceasefire.

Gerard Burke and Thomas Flynn became the first prisoners to be released since the IRA ended its earlier ceasefire in February last year.

Labour 'determined to tackle poverty'

Rebecca Smithers and Seumas Milne

THE Minister without Portfolio, Peter Mandelson, last week spearheaded a full-blooded government attempt to tackle poverty when he announced a radical new drive to rescue Britain's "underclass" from the twin dangers of unemployment and social exclusion.

In a wide-ranging speech approved by Downing Street, he became the first of Tony Blair's ministers to hint that extra resources from the tightly controlled public purse might eventually be made available for Britain's poorest people.

Mr Mandelson described social exclusion as the "greatest social crisis of our times" and confirmed the creation of a cabinet unit to mobilise the government machine in tackling it.

In announcing the plan he referred back to Margaret Thatcher's ill-fated "Action for Cities" programme in 1987 — the last serious attempt by a government to tackle the issues. Mr Mandelson said Mr Blair shared Mrs Thatcher's "rock-hard determination" not to revert to what she felt had been the mistakes of her predecessors. "We can deplore many of her policies while admiring her conviction".

Pledging that Labour would deliver a more equal society, Mr Mandelson said that attacking the "scourge and waste of social exclusion" was the key area where the Government could show that it could make a difference.

But as the Minister without Portfolio underlined the Government's commitment to putting the wide-ranging programme at the top of its agenda, attention inevitably centred upon the role of the messenger rather than the message. The Tories seized on the new Whitehall unit as a "job creation scheme for one man", while Labour critics and poverty pressure groups dismissed the plan as a "public relations gimmick" lacking in detail.

The former Labour deputy leader, Lord Hattersley, who has consistently called on the Government to tackle social inequality, welcomed the announcement as "unequivocally good news". But he criticised Mr Mandelson's speech as a "series of generalities" with "more public relations than policy" and warned that there had to be an improvement in benefit rates to alleviate the worst forms of poverty.

By securing the Prime Minister's agreement to use a long-scheduled Fabian Society lecture to identify himself with a core issue for Labour supporters, Mr Mandelson is likely to have boosted his chances in Labour's national executive committee elections next month.

One backbencher said: "This is clearly the latest vehicle for Mandelson's bid for power." Other mischievous Labour observers pointed to the fact that Mr Prescott, as "inner cities" minister, had no involvement in the policy announcement.

The NEC poll will be a battle between the modernising Red Rose presentational skills of Mr Mandelson and the traditional tax-and-spend policies of "Red" Ken Livingstone.

The two opposite wings of Labour are head-to-head in the clash for the seat vacated by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, who has decided to stand down. Both are being challenged by Peter Hain, the junior Welsh minister, who stands an outside chance.

Comment, page 12

Outrage at 'U-turn' over war pension

Vivek Chaudhary

THE Government was accused last week of a cynical U-turn after it declared it had no plans to review procedures which allow local councils to deprive veterans of up to 75 per cent of their war pensions.

War veterans' groups and the Conservatives criticised the Government, which in opposition and during the election campaign promised to review the anomaly which can lead to some war pensions being cut because of council means-testing.

Terry English, controller of welfare for the Royal British Legion, said: "It is simply unfair that a group of individuals who have unselfishly given for their country should be penalised by a few local authorities."

According to rules, local authorities are allowed to ignore war disability pensions and war widows' pensions when means-testing housing benefit and council tax benefit. While most authorities do ignore war pensions, 14 local authorities, most Labour-controlled, insist on disregarding just £10, which is the legal minimum. More than 30 other councils take differing percentages of war pensions into account when assessing benefits. Thus war pensioners in one council area are left with a fraction of the benefits they would receive if they lived in a neighbouring authority.

The shadow social security secretary, Iain Duncan Smith, claimed the Government was guilty of a cynical U-turn. He said: "Labour ministers should be ashamed of their failure to deliver the promises they made to veterans and their widows before the election. Time and again, Labour ministers said that helping war pensions would be a priority. How many more pre-election pledges are Labour planning to break?"

In 1995, the then shadow defence spokesman, Eric Martlew, pledged: "An incoming Labour government would review this policy of disregard." Last December, the then shadow environment minister, Frank Dobson, called on councils to pay the maximum benefit.

The 14 councils that ignore only the statutory £10 are Chester-le-Street, Derwentside, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Sunderland, Easington, Wear Valley, Gateshead, Redcar and Cleveland, Manchester, Liverpool, Oswestry and Norwich.

South Asia looks ahead

WHAT ARE the people of India and Pakistan celebrating this month? The same question that Mahatma Gandhi asked, just days before his assassination, is being posed all over the subcontinent. Gandhi spoke in a mood of disillusion alleviated by hope: partition had been a bitter blow, but he still dreamt of "the communal unity of the heart" and of a new India where "there will be neither paupers nor beggars, nor high nor low". Fifty years on, with the divisions just as deep and the poor far more numerous, is it possible even to dream?

There have been achievements: the very survival of the divided subcontinent, in spite of three wars, is remarkable. So is the persistence of democracy in India and the maintenance of the state in sub-divided Pakistan. Both countries have developed, against the odds, a sense of identity and nationhood. In percentage terms most people live longer and very few starve: there has been significant progress in infrastructural and industrial development. Yet South Asia performs far below its potential. The task now is to devise an agenda that will identify and tackle the causes of this persistent backwardness. Such an agenda demands international support if only because the world cannot afford to see South Asia become a geographical fault line between East and West.

The agenda starts with Kashmir — a potential flashpoint every bit as dangerous as the Middle East or Bosnia. Not only is it the single most divisive issue between Delhi and Islamabad but it provides poisonous nourishment for Indian chauvinism and Pakistani militarism. The Kashmiri people deserve a better fate than endemic violence encouraged from Pakistan and severe repression at the hands of the Indian army. National leaders are restrained by powerful interests. No one pretends that there is an easy solution. But common sense suggests it must lie in some form of internationally supervised autonomy that is sufficiently comprehensive for the question of sovereignty to be shelved, while both India and Pakistan recognise their existing frontiers. Sustained international pressure and encouragement is needed.

Fighting poverty, poor health and illiteracy are obvious high priorities on the subcontinent's action agenda. It is idle to suppose that market-led economic reform will take care of such vast problems: indeed, persistent backwardness is more likely to cripple the reforms. As the World Bank noted last year, "Growth alone will not be sufficient to meet the needs of South Asia's poor", and it recommended a shift of public spending towards the deprived — and particularly towards women, who "are less well educated, more frequently ill, have lower life expectancy, and work far longer hours". There has been no shortage of grand schemes in the past. But as this year's UNDP Human Development report argues, the commitment must be sustained over time and backed by social and political activism (as already achieved in the state of Kerala). The World Bank, too, should reinforce its concern by shifting investment from much-favoured China to South Asia.

The final item on the agenda could also be the pre-condition for its success: how to modernise political cultures that have been long warped by corruption, bureaucracy and quasi-feudal rule. There are elements too of idealism and commitment that should not be under-rated. But to translate them into reality may prove the biggest task ahead for the next 50 years.

Settling scores in Singapore

ASIAN politicians are known for being a tough bunch who do not wilt easily under criticism. All the more surprising that Singapore's leaders appear to possess such thin skins. Once again the Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, his predecessor, Lee Kuan Yew, and other top colleagues have resorted to action for civil defamation against J B Jeyaretnam, one of the three opposition members of a parliament dominated by the ruling party. Mr Goh says it is a question of refuting allegations made during last January's election that would undermine his ability to govern Singapore. But it is difficult to grasp just why Mr Goh, Mr Lee and the others should feel so aggrieved.

During the election campaign, Mr Goh hardly appeared to be lacking in self-confidence, and threatened neighbourhoods that supported the opposition with losing state-funded housing subsidies. The initial allegations from which this case stems were not made against him at all: they were made by the ruling People's Action party leaders against Mr Jeyaretnam's party colleague Tang Liang Hong, who was accused of being "anti-Christian" and a "Chinese chauvinist". This was strong language even by election campaign standards, and could be regarded as inflammatory. Mr Tang, who says he received death threats as a result, filed two complaints to the police. But a court in May found that in denying the accusations, Mr Tang had defamed the prime minister and 10 other leaders, and awarded record damages against him. Mr Jeyaretnam now stands equally accused of defamation on the grounds that during an election rally he referred briefly to Mr Tang's two complaints. The court will decide, but in most democratic countries the affair would be regarded as part of the political rough and tumble, and certainly not as a matter for litigation.

The US state department in its human rights report of January 1997 offers a different perspective. "Government leaders [in Singapore]", it says, "sometimes use defamation suits or the threat of such actions to discourage public criticism," and it notes that "the threat of civil libel or slander suits continues to discourage criticism or challenges by opposition leaders". Amnesty International says it is concerned at reports that the Singapore government has used such suits against political opponents "in a manner that violates their right to freely hold and peacefully express their convictions", and has sent an observer to attend Mr Jeyaretnam's trial. In the light of previous cases against opposition leaders and foreign media, these fears are well-justified. The Singapore government claims this is all part of a "conspiracy" against it. It might do better to reflect that even the most successful little tiger should have some regard for its image abroad — especially when the Asian miracle is beginning to fade. Hounding a handful of opposition leaders looks like a sign of weakness, not of strength. If Mr Goh wishes to show his confidence in governing Singapore, he should drop this shabby case.

Missing link in Labour's plan

TONY BLAIR has decided to set up a high-powered Whitehall task force to reduce inequality and social exclusion. It will be placed at the heart of government — in a special unit headed by Mr Blair within the Cabinet Office. It will tackle "the greatest social crisis of our times": the millions of people who lack the means to participate in the economic, social, cultural and political life in Britain today. The Prime Minister even listed the groups who needed help: the 5 million people in workless homes, the 3 million on the nation's 1,300 worst council estates, the 150,000 homeless families and the 100,000 children not attending school.

The most important declaration was that the poor should have more money "when economic circumstances and the reordering of public expenditure make this possible". Until now, Labour has never contradicted the Guardian's pre-election leak that Mr Blair had decreed there would be no improvement in benefit levels in this Parliament. Benefits were only to be indexed against prices rather than earnings, which would have meant the gap between rich and poor — already at record levels — would have got wider still. Labour moved from arguing that the party's anti-poverty strategy could not simply be about extra money for those on benefits, to a position that it was not about benefits at all.

Labour is right to want to reduce welfare dependency. We support the Government's welfare-to-work programme under which young people will be required to take up a job, training or work for a voluntary organisation. Where the Government has been wrong is in exaggerating the numbers that can be taken off welfare and the savings that such programmes will make, and ignoring the importance of social security as a strategy for combating poverty. One task should be to establish a minimum income standard as a benchmark for social security and employment as proposed by the party's Commission on Social Justice. Another should be to set poverty reduction targets, which would be an open commitment that would allow progress to be properly monitored. Third, and most important, would be to restore redistribution as a legitimate Labour goal.

For Britain, human rights begin at home

Jonathan Steele

SCARCELY 30km from the British Foreign Secretary's official country residence at Chevening in Kent stand the mighty walls of Rochester prison. A guide-book blurb of monumental insignificance? Or is there a genuine connection between the two buildings?

For those who want some early results from the Government's promise to put an ethical dimension into British foreign policy, indeed there is. Rochester prison holds close to 200 foreigners who have committed no crime other than to arrive in Britain and seek asylum. Many were physically brutalised in their own countries. Others lived in fear until they succeeded in escaping to what they hoped would be freedom. Most have been kept in a British prison cell for almost six months.

Doubts greeted Robin Cook's laudable wish to link human rights to British foreign policy even before he came a cropper at the first fence, over arms sales to Indonesia's authoritarian regime. It was partly the portentous "mission statement" that preceded it, and the looming sense that the mountain would produce a mouse.

Human rights policies easily stumble over selectivity issues. You scold the small offenders and ignore the big ones. You ban new weapons but turn a blind eye to existing contracts — the fault that undercut the Indonesian move. The Government's image-promoters conceded the new policy's poor start. This month's document, 100 Achievements in 100 Days, omitted to mention it. An obvious success to trumpet suddenly disappeared from view.

The doubts that centred on the policy from its inception went beyond the issue of hype. Restricting arms to obnoxious regimes is worth doing, but unless it is part of a comprehensive approach in which ethics connect and infuse all aspects of Britain's performance, it may be little more than a sophisticated Thank-God-we-are-better-than-they-are form of bashing foreigners.

The most pervasive denial of human rights around the world is not linked to military activity. It comes from poverty, hunger, and disease. Much of it is "new" poverty, caused by cutting health and education budgets, the heavy demands of debt repayment, and rich countries' instructions to Third World governments to switch agriculture to cash crops for export. The benefits of growth that derive from globalisation and the new mobility of capital are not being spread evenly between countries or within them. Globalisation creates pressures on all countries to compete for capital by cutting wages and lowering working and environmental conditions. An ethical foreign policy ought to alleviate this by insisting on minimum standards in trade agreements.

Above all, human rights must begin at home — which is where Rochester comes back into the picture. Amnesty International and every other monitoring group that has studied Britain's record conclude that the UK detains more foreigners than any other developed country. Britain is the only European state that locks asylum-seekers up without judicial review or any prescribed time limit.

Last week roughly 750 unconvicted foreigners were sitting helplessly in Rochester's cells or behind the barbed wire of four other main detention centres. Although the Home Office tries to suggest the detainees have exhausted all possible appeals and are simply being held to prevent them absconding before deportation, the reality is different. Recent Amnesty research showed that 82 per cent of Britain's foreign detainees had been held continuously since the day they first applied for asylum. They have no right to legal aid to apply for bail. Even if friends or support groups find the money, there is no presumption in favour of liberty as there is for British citizens in criminal cases.

The 750 detainees are only the tip of an iceberg of frustrated asylum-seekers that the Government inherited from the Conservatives. There is an astonishing backlog of 55,000 cases still awaiting an initial decision. At least these applicants live in liberty, though it is better described as a limbo of judicial and psychological uncertainty, which denies people the right to bring over their families and makes it hard to get credit or settle down. About a quarter have had more than four years of anxiety. They arrived before 1993, when the Asylum Act was changed.

ONE reason for the backlog is the Conservatives' record of trying to deter asylum-seekers. Like detention, delay was used as a form of punishment. Complicated procedures also contribute, although the last government's switch to a fast-track system merely pushed the obstruction down the line. After quick refusals at the first stage, asylum-seekers have the right to appeal. Some 22,000 asylum-seekers are waiting for a hearing.

Labour talks of being firm but fair, and has started a policy review. If it is to be genuinely fair, it must end the scandal of detentions. The risk of absconding comes when a person's last appeal is rejected. It should never be used when people first apply.

Looking to the longer term, the all-party reform group, Justice, as well as the Asylum Rights Campaign, have argued that no detainee should be held for more than four weeks at a time without the Home Office having to justify its reasons before a court. They criticise the Home Office's culture of disbelief when faced with asylum-seekers. Australia, Canada, and the Netherlands have regular consultations between officials and refugee advocates, as well as documentation centres that record the climate of repression in countries in order that immigration officials can put asylum claims in a well-informed context.

As for the thousands trapped in the backlog, why not an immediate amnesty, at least for those who have been waiting for two years or longer? The Government should name a cut-off date and let them stay here, with the right to bring their spouses or close family to join them. Human rights for foreigners who see Britain as a place of refuge are as much a matter of ethics as any other part of Britain's international stance.

The Washington Post



Masked demonstrators use a bus to barricade a road in La Plata, south of the capital, during a 24-hour general strike by union members and government employees last week that wreaked havoc in much of Argentina, *writes Anthony Faiola in Buenos Aires.* Angry demonstrators abandoned their jobs and blocked roads and bridges to protest the labor polices of President Carlos Menem's administration.

The strike reflected a significant political shift in Argentina, where a powerful new alliance of parties united last week in opposition to Menem's government. The alliance, which joins the center-right Radical Party and the leftist Frepaso, has suddenly made the opposition a real threat to Menem's Peronists, who for years have enjoyed political supremacy amid a fractured opposition.

The provinces have been hardest hit by the free-market reforms put in place by Menem's government in 1991. In some states, unemployment has shot up to almost 40 percent as state-owned industries have been privatised.

PHOTOGRAPH: WILLY LOPEZ

Bill Gives Tobacco Firms $50bn Credit

John Mintz

AS CONGRESS raced to pass a massive tax cut bill late last month, Sen. Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Mississippi, and House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Georgia, insisted on a provision that would give tobacco companies a $50 billion credit against the sum they had pledged to settle anti-tobacco litigation, according to congressional staffers and Clinton administration officials.

The state attorneys general who negotiated the historic settlement with the tobacco industry have since warned the companies in a letter that the credit provision — which was passed without debate, without an identified sponsor and before many industry critics realized what was happening — could cause them to scuttle the deal.

"The tobacco industry would have us believe this [credit] language appeared like Our Lady of Lourdes," said James E. Tierney, a former Maine attorney general and a consultant to the attorneys general. "People felt [cigarette firms] had gone back on their word in a very fundamental way."

Lott and Gingrich do not acknowledge having sponsored the credit provision, to which the Clinton administration agreed reluctantly. The provision was attached to the tax cut bill approved on July 31. But both have said they supported the measure. Spokesmen for the two Republican leaders did not return telephone messages inquiring about the matter last week.

Tobacco industry critics said the unusual handling of the credit provision demonstrates anew the tobacco firms' clout on Capitol Hill and their penchant for back-room deals even as tobacco executives profess a new spirit of openness in promoting the agreement before Congress.

"This is a $50 billion orphan nobody claims," said Sen. Richard J. Durbin, D-Illinois, an industry critic. "But it's there, and it illustrates how this industry operates in the shadows."

The credit provision was first proposed two months ago by about 20 GOP House members from tobacco states, congressional staffers said. The lawmakers, prompted by industry lobbyists, broached the idea to Gingrich and Lott, who pressed it in House-Senate conference sessions on the balanced budget and tax cut bills, congressional staff members said. The Republican leaders saw the credit provision as the only way to guarantee that tobacco-state House Republicans would vote for GOP budget and tax measures, according to numerous congressional staffers and lobbyists active on tobacco issues. But administration officials always succeeded in swatting away the proposal, said Rep. John M. Spratt Jr., D-South Carolina, who monitored the negotiating sessions.

As the sessions ground on, the number of participants winnowed down to just Lott and Gingrich on the one side and administration negotiators on the other.

On July 28, Lott and Gingrich told the administration's negotiators that they intended to stand firm on the credit provision. According to White House spokesman Barry Toiv, the GOP leaders said there would be no 15-cent cigarette tax increase without the $50 billion credit to offset industry's liabilities.

The administration's negotiators caved. "It was necessary to have that [credit] provision there in order to get the [cigarette tax-financed] children's health program," White House spokesman Michael McCurry said days later

The controversy over the credit provision spotlights the tobacco industry's generosity to the GOP. Tobacco companies gave 83 percent of their $1.9 million in unregulated "soft" money donations to the Republicans in the first half of 1997, Common Cause reported. In the last 10 years, the two GOP leaders were among Congress's top recipients of tobacco industry funds: Lott got $50,250 and Gingrich $72,750.

The credit provision was devised to soften the pain of two financial karate chops aimed at the tobacco industry. The first is the June 20 agreement, under which cigarette firms would pay $368.5 billion over the next 25 years to settle anti-tobacco lawsuits, pay people injured by smoking and finance health programs. In return, the firms would avoid some liability in future lawsuits. Congress is set to consider the proposed settlement this fall, after Clinton offers his version. The second financial hit was the 15-cent cigarette tax increase, approved by the Senate after the June 20 agreement.

Russian Spaceman Defends His Role

Daniel Williams in Korolyov

TWO RUSSIAN cosmonauts returned safely to Earth last week, ending a troubled six-month voyage aboard the Mir space station, whose frequent breakdowns threaten to cripple Russia's space program.

Cosmonauts Vasily Tsibliev and Alexander Lazutkin parachuted to Earth aboard a Soyuz space capsule. They landed in Kazakstan, a former Soviet republic from which Russian space probes are launched and on whose desert expanse manned missions end.

The return of the cosmonauts is far from the end of their ordeal. They will now be queried on their role in various mishaps — in particular, a June 25 collision with a cargo craft that punched a hole in Spektr, one of Mir's six modular chambers.

The collision was the low point in their mission, which the government's Tass news agency said set a "dismal record" for mishaps. However, President Boris Yeltsin congratulated the returning cosmonauts for their "persistence, courage and heroism."

Last weekend Tsibliev's gave his account of the dramatic collision, which endangered the lives of Mir's crew and raised questions about Russia's 36-year-old human space program. The Mir commander gave a spirited and sometimes embittered defense of his performance during what proved to be a calamitous six months in space. Having kept Mir aloft, he is now trying to salvage his professional reputation, and he did not hesitate to offer a wide range of targets to blame.

Tsibliev's role has become the stuff of controversy in Russia. Last week, Yeltsin cited "human error," meaning Tsibliev's, as being responsible for the crash. Newspapers have published unflattering descriptions of Tsibliev; the most recent, in the newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda, labeled him a battering ram — apparently, a reference to his personality as well as the collision.

"Perhaps many wanted us to return as corpses, thinking that would have been great. Thank God everything turned out as it should have," Tsibliev said.

Behind the issue of scapegoating stands a larger question: whether Russia can maintain a first-class space program in a time of economic hardship, budget shortages and general disarray in the government and society. That is a matter of pride as well as science. For all its problems, Mir is the world's only space station, and its venerable hull has sheltered cosmonauts for 11 years.

Meanwhile, Russia's cavalcade of glitches in space resumed last Sunday when Mission Control postponed docking an unmanned cargo vessel to the Mir space station because of computer problems. This time, the problem lay not with Mir, but between Mission Control and the Progress cargo craft, whose computer rejected an electronic order from Earth to fire rockets and approach Mir.

U.S. Troop Training in Rwanda Extensive

Lynne Duke in Johannesburg

U.S. INVOLVEMENT with Rwanda's military has been far more extensive than previously disclosed, including psychological operations and tactical Special Forces exercises that occurred a few weeks before the start of last fall's Rwanda-led insurgency in neighboring Congo, an internal Defense Department chronology shows.

The ongoing training in Rwanda has occurred over the last three years and involved hundreds of Rwandan participants. Their training, most often by U.S. military personnel in battle dress uniform, has included combat, military management, disaster relief, soldier team development, land-mine removal, and military and civilian justice, according to the Defense chronology draft, which is being prepared — but has not yet been released — in response to congressional questions about the U.S. military role in Rwanda.

U.S. officials have offered various descriptions of the nature of this training, sometimes calling it classroom-style, and generally suggesting it is intended simply to professionalize the Rwandan military and inculcate it with respect for human rights. But the chronology indicates the training was extensive and included combat training, and it shows a near-continuous presence of U.S. military personnel in Rwanda since early 1995.

"The program has not been as innocuous as it is being made out to be," said a policy official familiar with the eight-page draft document, which was obtained by The Washington Post.

The training came amid a more widespread U.S. effort to seek greater military involvement with a number of African nations. The regular U.S. presence in Rwanda and the training that was offered occurred as the small, poverty-stricken, Central African nation, with tacit U.S. support, was suddenly emerging as a regional power broker.

The Rwandan military, dominated by members of the Tutsi ethnic minority, was mounting a campaign against armed, ethnic Hutu militia groups that were attacking Rwanda from refugee camps in neighboring Congo, then known as Zaire. That campaign evolved into a broader offensive that eventually toppled the autocratic Zairian president, Mobutu Sese Seko.

While being trained by the United States, Rwanda's military was itself training Zairians to participate in the ultimately successful anti-Mobutu forces. A high-level Pentagon official last week acknowledged the possibility that, inadvertently, the United States may have trained some of the fighters who ousted Mobutu.

The Pentagon official, who is familiar with the draft chronology, said the Special Forces training that Rwanda received in 1996 was designed in part to help Rwandan Vice President and Defense Minister Maj. Gen. Paul Kagame meet the militia threat from the refugee camps. The official denied that this was counterinsurgency training, as has been alleged in a recent report by Physicians for Human Rights.

Kathi Austin, a Human Rights Watch investigator, told the House Committee on International Affairs last month that U.S. military personnel in Rwanda told her in 1996 that U.S. counterinsurgency training was underway there.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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N.Y. Police Shakeup Follows 'Brutality'

Blaine Harden in New York

MAYOR Rudolph W. Giuliani last week ordered a wholesale shakeup in a Brooklyn police station where a white officer allegedly sodomized a Haitian immigrant with the handle of toilet plunger.

The Republican mayor, responding to widespread outrage in the black community and to sharp criticism from his political opponents, transferred the commander and executive officer of the police station. He also ordered eight other policemen in the precinct off active duty and suspended a sergeant who was in the station house on the night the Haitian was brutalized.

Giuliani's orders came in reaction to what police allegedly did to Abner Louima, who was arrested after a scuffle outside a Brooklyn nightclub and brought back to the 70th Precinct station in Flatbush.

Louima, 33, said police beat him, stripped off his pants, pilfered money from his wallet, shouted racial insults at him and ordered him into a bathroom in the station house, where he said one officer shoved the wooden handle of a toilet plunger up his anus and then stuck it in his mouth, breaking off several of his top front teeth.

"He said 'stupid nigger . . . know how to respect cops. This is Giuliani time. It is not Dinkins time,'" Louima said last week in a television interview from his hospital bed in Coney Island, where he is in intensive care with punctured intestines and a damaged bladder — wounds doctors say were caused by a "blunt instrument."

In 1993, Giuliani defeated David N. Dinkins, New York's first black mayor, after a campaign in which crime was the dominant issue. Giuliani, who charged in that campaign that Dinkins was soft on crime and who won just 5 percent of the black vote, has since gained national recognition for implementing a "zero-tolerance" style of policing that many criminologists — and an overwhelming majority of New York City residents — believe has reduced violent crime here.

A downside of the mayor's success, however, has been a 56 percent increase in complaints about police misconduct. Black community leaders have often charged that the police force, which is 70 percent white in a city where 60 percent of population is non-white, uses unnecessary force and intimidation in black neighborhoods. While blacks make up about 29 percent of the city's population, they have filed about 53 percent of the complaints about police brutality.

"This is Giuliani's achilles heel — race relations and police misconduct," said Norman Seigel, executive director here for the American Civil Liberties Union. "Even if he gets re-elected, he is never going to go down as a real leader unless he can address this problem."

The mayor, who faces re-election in November, responded to Louima's statement that his policeman-torturer had warned him to respect the police during "Giuliani time." "If in fact any cop said this, the cop doesn't know what I stand for, what the police department stands for and he doesn't deserve to be a member of the New York Police Department," he said.

In this year's mayoral race, polls have shown Giuliani with a commanding lead over his likely Democratic challenger, Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger. She responded to the Louima story as "repulsive and horrifying." "I am especially concerned by the allegation because they show a disturbing pattern — a pattern of people in the custody of the city being abused by the very people who are supposed to protect them," Messinger said.

One officer from the 70th Precinct, Justin Volpe, 25, a four-year veteran who is the son of a policeman, was arraigned last week on charges of aggravated sexual assault and first-degree assault. He faces up to 40 years in prison. His partner that night, Thomas Bruder, 31, has been ordered off active duty. Investigators say they expect to make more arrests in the case. Both Volpe and Bruder have denied any wrongdoing.

All charges against Louima, who was arrested for assaulting an officer at the nightclub, have been dropped.

"I don't consider this an act of police brutality. I consider it a criminal act committed by people who are criminals," Police Commissioner Howard Safir said at a press conference that announced the shakeup at the 70th Precinct.

Giuliani characterized the affair as "shocking". Besides ordering the shakeup at the Flatbush station, the mayor has visited Louima at his bedside and is publicly questioning the behavior of any police officers who might have been able to help Louima at the police station.

"I would like an explanation why people sat around while he was suffering and were not able to figure out how to get him to the hospital," Giuliani said, referring to a 90-minute interval during which Louima was kept in a holding cell, while he was bleeding heavily and demanding medical treatment.

Louima's lawyer, Carl Thomas, called for a federal investigation. "We are not happy with what has taken place thus far in terms of the [one] arrest and we are calling for a full federal investigation," he said.



New York City police officers outside Brooklyn's 70th precinct police station face a crowd of demonstrators who cheer on a woman as she reenacts the alleged sodomy PHOTOGRAPH: DAMON WINTER

Slaves to A Leisurely Lifestyle

COMMENT
Ellen Goodman

I LIKE to think of the first TV ad as a sales pitch against personal hygiene. It stars a woman at home, dressed for success in bathrobe and slippers, professionally outfitted with phone, laptop and modem, bragging that she puts in a whole day of work before taking a shower.

The second ad is more of a pitch against working-mother guilt. This features a woman getting ready to abandon her neglected kids to a sitter when — Eureka! — she decides to take them to the beach and do business in a swimsuit with a cell phone.

Now, these are not really public service ads to preserve water or mother-child relationships. They are telephone service ads selling the virtues of new communication. The idea is that these wonderful new tools can knock down the walls of the old office and set us free! Workers of the world unite for cell phones!

What we have here is a 30-second version of the vast, ongoing nationwide hype about the personal advantages of the new technology. In one way or another, every maker of a fax, cell phone, laptop or pager is trying to convince us that their goal is to liberate people so they can work anywhere. The dirty little secret they neglect to mention, however, is that people who can work anywhere end up working *everywhere*.

We all know that Americans are spending more hours on the job. The typical two-earner couple works a day and a half more every week than in 1980. But it's becoming less clear when and where the job ends. Have you actually left work if you log on at home? Have you punched out if you're checking voice mails from the car? Is it private time if there's a fax waiting to be read when the kids are asleep?

Last winter, there was a story in The Wall Street Journal about a wife who drew the line when her husband brought his laptop to bed. So much for open marriage. Work has become the *menage a trois* of the plugged-in household. Home is not where the heart is, it's where the satellite office is. Even those of us who aren't officially telecommuting are tele-moonlighting.

The cell phone has made it possible to hike around a national park — with one foot in the office. The laptop makes it easy to check in — from outward bound. Indeed with the tools of our trades we can now get anywhere — except, of course, away from it all.

In fact the creeping, dialing, logging-on assumption of our times is that no one is or should be ever truly out of touch. You can always take one teeny call, or answer one itty-bitty message.

The problem with this new modem of living is the bargain it's struck. You can take your body out of the workplace; you just can't take your head out.

It is wholly perverse that a technology producing a new cohort of workaholics is being sold for its leisurely lifestyle. In reality, the ocean front may well become another work site. But work will never be a day at the beach.

Scandal Throws Open South Korea Race

Kevin Sullivan in Seoul

WHEN LEE Soo Yon reported for his compulsory military service in 1989, military authorities excused him because he was judged to be severely underweight — just 90 pounds, even though he stood 5 feet 5 inches tall. Two years later, Lee's brother, Lee Jung Yon, received a similar exemption because he reported for duty standing nearly 5-foot-11 and weighing just 99 pounds.

The exemption from military service for the two brothers from a well-to-do Seoul family raised few eyebrows at the time, even though each had dropped more than 20 pounds between their initial military physicals and the dates they reported for duty.

But now that their father, former Supreme Court justice Lee Hoi Chang, is running for president as the ruling party's anointed successor to President Kim Young Sam, the two young men's lack of military service has become a candidate's nightmare, raising questions of special treatment for the well-connected elite.

And the scandal has turned the race toward the December 18 presidential election into South Korea's most closely contested campaign and most vivid expression of multi-party democracy in its modern history.

For decades, the ruling party's candidate was virtually guaranteed to win. Now, with President Kim's party buffeted by scandals (including one that landed his son on trial for corruption) and Lee's squeaky-clean image tarnished, the presidential campaign has become a wide-open contest among at least four, and maybe five or more, serious candidates. And the ruling New Korea Party has found itself in the unusual position of trying to boost a candidate running second in the polls.

"Nothing illegal has been done, and nobody has tried to intentionally evade military service," Lee said in an interview last week. "I'm having a little bit of a hard time now. But once it has been made clear that nothing illegal was done, I don't think this is an obstacle I cannot overcome."

Lee, 62, an intellectual public servant who has built a reputation for integrity and strict enforcement of the law, had approval ratings as high as 40 percent when he was nominated by the New Korea Party at its convention last month. A former prime minister, Lee was seen as the kind of "Mr. Clean" who could help the party hang onto the presidency by distancing it from financial scandals and sleaze that have plagued it during Kim's term.

But within days, opposition politicians raised the issue of Lee's sons' military service. Although no wrongdoing has been proven, the resulting scandal has driven Lee's popularity ratings to just 25 percent in polls taken last week, opening the door for South Korea's first truly unpredictable election in decades.

In 1992, South Korea elected Kim Young Sam as its first civilian president since the early 1960s. But Kim came from a ruling party with strong backing from former military leaders that turned out to be unbeatable. Now, the ruling party is vulnerable and opposition leaders see an unprecedented opportunity.

"We may see the transfer of power from the ruling party to the opposition, which hasn't happened in Korea since [the 1940s]; we have a unique chance to accomplish this historical feat," said Lee Jong Chan, vice president of the main opposition party, the National Congress for New Politics, whose leader, Kim Dae Jung, now leads Lee in the opinion polls.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Canada Imports Troubles With Refugees

Ottawa tries to balance possible threats with maintaining liberties, **Howard Schneider** reports from Toronto

IN THE taxonomy of global terrorism, Canada might seem like a bit player, a middle power with no symbolic value as a target, no colonial past to inspire vengeance and few controversial entanglements in the world.

But on the streets of Toronto, an estimated several thousand members of the Tamil Tiger rebel group have taken temporary refuge from their rebellion against Sri Lanka, using Canada as a base to re-fund and regroup. In some neighborhoods, rival gangs, not directly linked to the Tigers but vicious nonetheless, have dueled in gun battles for control of the local turf.

In British Columbia, militant Sikhs press their cause for a separate state in India through local clashes with more moderate members of the religion and, in one notorious case, the 1985 bombing of an Air India jet bound from Canada to Asia.

Canadian security officials believe the radical Shiite Muslim group Hezbollah has an "infrastructure" in Canada to harbor terrorists from abroad and possibly plan future attacks. And since the 1960s Jewish and other groups have monitored, and complained about, the relatively comfortable lives Nazi war criminals, convicted Palestinian terrorists and others have had in some of Canada's most innocuous, middle-class neighborhoods.

The country in modern times has opened its arms to the world, offering shelter to tens of thousands of refugees seeking protection under United Nations conventions, encouraging the immigration of skilled workers and investors, and transforming the nation's cities into a polyglot mosaic. But in doing so, Canada also has imported the political struggles of those refugee and immigrant groups, and, some security analysts feel, offered too passive a response.

"We need to wise up in more general terms about the growing nature of the threat," said Dave Harris, president of Insignis Strategic Research and the former director of strategic planning for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Canada's spy agency.

"It all adds up to expanding networks, and it is the network nature of what is going on that is alarming," Harris said, citing expatriate groups such as the Tamil Tigers trying to support a rebellion from abroad and organizations like Hezbollah that see Canada as a gateway to the rest of North America. "You have organized channels and movement and infrastructure, and we are seeing evidence of the expansion of these things with the use of Canada as a base."

Gathering intelligence on groups such as the Tigers or Hezbollah, or on individuals who might pose a security threat in Canada, falls primarily to CSIS. The agency says little publicly about its work, only that it coordinates closely with the immigration service. Mr Harris points out, however, that the agency's budget has been cut along with that of every other government department as Canada battles its deficit, and that CSIS's total staffing has fallen to 2,200 from an estimated 2,700 at a time when its mission has become more sophisticated.

There is certainly no shortage of work: Twice in the last few months, individuals from the Middle East surfaced in Canada who subsequently were linked to actual or planned bomb attacks aimed at Americans.

Hani Abdel Rahim Sayegh was deported to the United States from Ottawa to face charges associated with the bombing of an apartment building in Saudi Arabia a year ago that killed 19 American military personnel. He was seeking refugee status here but was arrested after U.S. and Saudi officials told Canadians about his possible involvement in the bombing and his membership in Hezbollah.

Last month, Gazi Ibrihim Abu Mezer, 23, was arrested in Brooklyn after police there were tipped off that he and a roommate were planning a bomb attack on the New York subway. Abu Mezer had been living in Canada since 1993, when he won refugee status by arguing that, as a Palestinian, he had been persecuted in Israel, according to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

CANADIAN immigration spokesman Benoit Chiquette said that whenever concern over terrorist activity in North America is raised, it must be counterbalanced with concern over the civil liberties and rights that make Canada attractive to the vast majority of immigrants who are law-abiding. Politics alone does not make a person dangerous, he said, a basic principle upheld in the Canadian courts.

"We live in a democratic society where we have chosen to have freedom of movement," said Chiquette. "With the huge movement of people, it would be impossible to assure that we would never allow [in] someone inadmissible."

Canadian law enforcement officials know all too well the repercussions of a mistake. In 1985, Air India Flight 182 exploded off the coast of Ireland, en route from Toronto to India. The explosion killed all 329 people aboard, most of them Canadians. The chief suspects were members of a Sikh separatist group based in British Columbia. One of the central suspects was killed in a gun battle with Indian police several years ago, but Royal Canadian Mounted Police investigators are still trying to develop evidence so others can be charged.

In another recent case, the Mounted Police had to charge one of its own after it was discovered that a man hired to translate documents, Kumaravelu Vignarajah, was a commander of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, a paramilitary group Canada considers a "terrorist organization." He was also, apparently, a spy for the Sri Lankan intelligence service. Vignarajah, one of an estimated several thousand possible Tiger guerrillas in the Toronto area, had been given refugee status in 1989.

In such cases, CSIS and other Canadian officials note, the country is swift to move and has shown its willingness, as it did with Sayegh, to invoke national security and deport people considered to pose a terrorist threat.

More ambiguous, say such activists as Canadian Jewish Congress director Bernie Farber, has been the response to people who have done wrong abroad but seem to pose little threat to Canada itself. In a country that prides itself on diversity, the risk of offending any particular nationality, when there is no imminent danger to Canadians, can weigh heavily. For example, the country has only begun investigating a handful of cases, despite the likely presence in Canada of at least several dozen, and perhaps several hundred, former Nazis, including some who fled from the United States as a result of investigations there.

Others also have been able to stay in Canada far too long, Farber contends. Mahmoud Mohammad Issa Mohammad was convicted in Greece in the late 1960s for the bombing of an El Al plane, an act carried out under the banner of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Released from a Greek prison in a hostage exchange, he eventually was allowed to immigrate to Canada.

A political uproar ensued, and Canadian officials decided to move to deport him. That was 10 years ago. His case is still in the courts.

"Unless they can bring past criminals who abuse our immigration system to justice," Farber said, "today's criminals will look to Canada . . . What we have said in the past is bearing unfortunate fruit."



While the vast majority of immigrants are law-abiding, some have imported the violence of their political struggles PHOTO: JOHN HARRIS

Moving Mountains of Illicit Cash

Douglas Farah

MEXICAN and Colombian drug traffickers, confronted with regulations that make it increasingly difficult to transfer electronically their hundreds of millions of dollars in illicit gains back home, are facing a quandary: what to do with the mountains of cash their business generates, mostly in small bills.

In congressional testimony last month, Deputy Assistant Attorney General Mary Lee Warren said the drug traffickers' need to move huge, heavy volumes of cash "could provide law enforcement with perhaps its best opportunity to target these illicit proceeds."

According to Justice Department calculations, the weight of the cash generated by the street sale of heroin is about 10 times the weight of the drug itself, so a ton of heroin generates 10 tons of cash. For cocaine, the weight is about six times the weight of the drug sold.

"If a trafficking organization sells $1 billion worth of illicit drugs on the streets of New York, it must contend with more than 256,000 pounds of illicit currency," Warren said. "If we assume a conservative figure of $50 billion for all illicit drugs sold in the United States, the amount of illicit currency produced by those sales weights almost 13 million pounds."

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, drug traffickers, dealing with far smaller volumes of cash, shipped it back home on the same airplanes and boats that delivered the drugs to the United States.

As business boomed and the traffickers became more sophisticated, they became proficient at using the banking system and money exchange houses to have their money delivered to their home countries with a minimum of risk.

The criminal organizations also developed sophisticated strategies for laundering their money, or making it appear the money is the result of legitimate business operations, by creating hundreds of phony companies that allow them to justify their huge cash flow.

But law enforcement agencies increasingly have targeted the flow of money, adding new reporting requirements to banks and cracking down on unregulated exchange houses that electronically transfer money from the United States. The measures have made moving millions of dollars more time-consuming, expensive and risky. As a result, the traffickers are again favoring bulk shipments of cash to their home countries.

Rep. Bill McCollum (R-Florida), who chairs the House Judiciary subcommittee on crime, said at the congressional hearings that "the Mexican money-laundering problem has grown so bad that drug traffickers are now driving truckloads of cash to Mexico without being challenged along the 2,000-mile southwest border."

"It's now estimated that $6 billion to $30 billion in drug profits are laundered through Mexico annually," McCollum said. "And it's also estimated that more than $2.5 billion in drug money is funneled back into Colombia each year — an amount equal to Colombia's annual income from coffee sales and representing about 20 percent of Colombia's total exports."

To deal with the overwhelming cash volume, the Mexican and Colombian trafficking organizations are constantly developing new ways to ship the cash in bulk, usually in the form of $20 bills.

"As the cartels move back to bulk shipments, they have developed a whole new infrastructure because there is so much," said a senior Drug Enforcement Administration official in New York. "They are shipping bills back in airplanes, in cargo, in furniture, in TVs, in washing machines, anywhere it fits."

So as not to alert customs officials, the money packaging specialists make sure commodities filled with money weigh the same as the commodity normally would.

For example, the DEA official said, a Colombian specialist arrested last month shipped more than $2.5 million back to Colombia by carefully hollowing out speakers, toasters and refrigerators, filling them to their normal weight with $20 bills, and reassembling the merchandise so perfectly it was nearly undetectable.

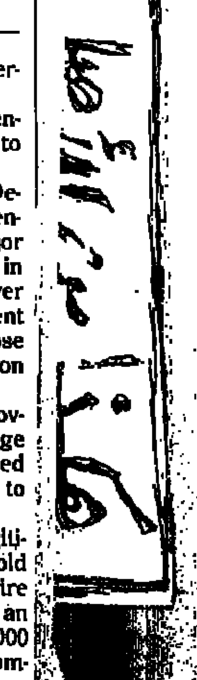
Recent laws have given law enforcement officials more tools to fight money laundering.

Raymond Kelly, the Treasury Department's undersecretary for enforcement, said that major money-laundering operations in New York have been shut down over the last year because his department now has the authority to impose stiffer reporting requirements on specific geographic regions.

Kelly said Treasury had discovered that 12 money exchange houses in New York "had funneled approximately $800 million to Colombia last year."

"To account for the money legitimately, each Colombian household in the area would have had to wire $30,000 to Colombia each year — an amount which exceeds the $27,000 average annual income for this community," Kelly said.

Because of the anomaly, Treasury was able to require the exchange houses to report any transaction over $750, leading to six indictments and several businesses shutting down.



Grim Tidings From Africa's Front Line

Jonathan Yardley

LAST DAYS IN CLOUD CUCKOOLAND
Dispatches from White Africa
By Graham Boynton
Random House. 289 pp. $24.

BORN IN ENGLAND not long after the end of World War II, Graham Boynton moved with his parents to Rhodesia in 1951 and soon came to regard himself as a child of that country: "Whatever my birthplace, it was in Africa that my identity was forged; somewhere amid the rapid dismemberment of colonial rule, the wars and the triumph of black nationalism I became a white African, and will remain so for the rest of my life wherever I live." But though those feelings have not changed, Africa most certainly has; when Boynton returned to Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, in 1990, "I had become a foreign guest, and welcome though I was, I found myself lurking self-consciously on the fringes of a society that had once been my own."

The passage between these two Africas — one in which whites not merely felt comfortable but were firmly in command, another in which they were on the fringes, their power rapidly waning — is the central story of Last Days In Cloud Cuckooland. Boynton takes his title from an offhand remark made by Margaret Thatcher in 1987, when asked if Nelson Mandela's African National Congress might someday take over South Africa. "Anyone who thinks the ANC is going to run the government of South Africa," she said, "is living in Cloud Cuckooland." As Boynton adds, "To be fair to Mrs. Thatcher, any kind of negotiated settlement in South Africa had seemed far-fetched in the mid-1980s, and the idea that the Afrikaners would release Nelson Mandela from prison had been too ludicrous to contemplate." Yet in barely a decade the African landscape has changed so dramatically that everything Mrs. Thatcher mocked, and much more, has become reality.

March 1994: The image that symbolised the end of white rule in Africa
PHOTOGRAPH KEVIN CARTER

To the examination of this strange phenomenon Boynton brings an interesting set of bona fides. On the one hand his record of support for black African political power and independence is strong; he was expelled from South Africa in 1975 as an "undesirable alien" because of his sympathy for anti-apartheid groups, and he was friendly with many of their leaders, white and black alike. But as a near-native white African he also has an intimate understanding of the powerful emotions the continent stirs.

As his subtitle suggests, Boynton's focus is less on black Africa's triumph than on white Africa's defeat. The image that dominates his account will be familiar to most readers: "three Boers lying dead on a dusty African street," killed one day in 1994 by a black policeman, "a single picture that signifies the end of white resistance, the end of white rule, on the African continent." As he quite correctly notes, "It is a small and pathetic vignette to mark so momentous an event, and yet it is perfectly appropriate — a dramatic and pointless flourish that will be remembered more for its symbolism than for its real significance. By the time [these men] had sacrificed themselves, the new South Africa was already in place."

That passage is of a piece with much of the best and most perceptive writing about whites in Africa, from Joseph Conrad to William Boyd, to both of whom Boynton pays his respects in the course of his narrative. This is because implicit in it is the understanding that, however deeply any white may feel about Africa, he or she is fundamentally an outsider, an interloper, one fated to lose out in what Boynton calls "the great dramas of African colonial history." His specific reference is to the "20-year struggle for the soul of Rhodesia, featuring constitutional rebellion, international intrigue, a deadly civil war and two principal characters straight out of Central Casting," but the description could apply just as well to the struggle in any place where the dominant white minority finally came face to face with the angry, impatient, insistent black majority.

Writing about race in Africa is a tricky business, every bit as tricky as writing about race in the United States. Questions of human rights and justice collide with economic and social realities. Boynton believes unambiguously in the full guarantee of the former but does not shrink from confronting the latter. Thus his account begins and ends with images and facts that many readers will find distasteful. The first is of "a new generation of brutal and nihilistic criminals" who now terrorize both whites and their fellow blacks in South Africa, producing a crime rate rising at "twice the international average" and "confrontations between the haves and the have-nots [that] had turned very nasty." Though the explanation for this crime is primarily economic, it has the unhappy effect of confirming white South Africans in their fear of "*swartgevaar*, which means black danger."

The second is neither image nor fear but fact: Africa is in "staggering" political and economic decline. "Whatever the moral imperatives of Africa's emancipation," Boynton writes, "the realities of the liberation era seemed to suggest that Africa was unable to govern itself." The explanation for this, too, has little to do with race and much to do with preparedness, but only the blind could dispute that in most countries, "no matter what the shortcomings of colonial rule, black rule had been even worse for the ordinary African." In the words of Olusegon Obasanjo, former president of Nigeria: "Everywhere in Africa the evidence is of dereliction and decay. We are rapidly becoming the Third World's Third World."

None of this is an argument for the return of colonialism or white rule in any form. It is simply an acknowledgement of the sad reality that almost every opportunity for an orderly, peaceful transition from white to black rule was missed; that whites imposed economic and political systems on Africa without helping Africa learn how to manage either; that whites overturned centuries of fruitful African coexistence with nature, replacing it with raw exploitation that now continues in African hands; that arrayed against conservationists, as against almost everyone trying to save Africa in any regard, are "too many forces working against them, too many agendas being proffered, too much greed and corruption washing over them."

There is no false optimism in this fine book. Though much of it is lively reading, even entertaining, Last Days In Cloud Cuckooland paints a grim portrait in which precious little hope is offered. There is no reason to believe that any other honest account would reach significantly different conclusions.

A People Betrayed by Friend and Foe

By Christopher Hitchens

AFTER SUCH KNOWLEDGE, WHAT FORGIVENESS?
My Encounters with Kurdistan
Jonathan C. Randal
Farrar Straus Giroux. 356 pp. $25.

KANGAROOING down some ghastly road on the Iraqi-Turkish border in the spring of 1992, I came to a stop and ran into some Western journalistic colleagues going the other way. There was the usual exchange of gossip and rumor and tradecraft and then: "Pity you weren't here an hour or two ago. Randal was passing through." These and similar words had become something of a mantra for anybody interested in the Kurdish situation. If you turned up to interview a Kurdish leader, or arrived in some desperate refugee camp, you were liable to be asked if you knew Randal (a distinguished Washington Post foreign correspondent) or if you were aware of the fact that he had just left or was expected any minute. Others of us turned in our stories and in some cases finished our books, but the considered Randal view of the situation remained always *in potentia*. I blush to say that there were even some heartless jokes on the subject. But now we have the book, and the joke is on us.

Randal has brought the Kurds to life, if you will allow the expression, by describing both them and his long struggle to discover and understand them. His elephantine gestation time was put to good use. How many Americans know that the Kurds were given an American promise of self-government by President Woodrow Wilson? How many Americans know that Henry Kissinger used the Kurds as surrogates and mercenaries and then abandoned them in their hour of trial? How many Americans know that the Bush administration, which later yelled about the fact that the Kurds had been gassed by Saddam Hussein, had kept suspiciously quiet about that very gassing at the time when it occurred? In these pages, you can read someone who feels a quiet but definite sense of responsibility for what he is narrating: a feeling that these people do not live on some exotic planet but in the same international community as the Council on Foreign Relations and the State Department.

The essential facts about the Kurds can be briefly stated. They are an ancient people, at least as old as the Karduchoi described by Xenophon in his Anabasis, who are neither Persians nor Arabs nor Turks. They dwell, however, in the mountainous confluence of the region covered by Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran. This is not an ideal home for an ethnic or national minority, and was pretty rugged even before the discovery of oil. Numbering not less than 25 million, the Kurds are the largest people in the world to lack a state of their own. Their curse, apart from their geography, is their feudal and clan tradition and their gullibility when employed as proxies by seductive outside powers.

This book is, therefore, no romance. Randal is perfectly well aware of his subject's shortcomings. Many a Kurdish windpipe has been severed — and they continue to be severed — by a Kurdish blade. Most recently, in the semi-autonomous zone covered by the Pentagon's post-Gulf War "Operation Provide Comfort," the Kurds of northern Iraq reduced their foreign friends to despair by first holding an election and then settling remaining issues at gunpoint. Nevertheless, Kurdish forces and spokesmen have always been to the fore in democratic and reform movements in all four of their compulsory "homelands," and the future of civilized discourse in Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria is inextricably bound up with their fate. So, Randal says, pay attention.

He intersperses his historical and political observations in a travelogue of great charm. It's no joke for anyone to voyage into the Beka'a Valley and meet the quasi-Stalinist tough guys of the Kurdish Workers Party, or to wade through snowdrifts on the Iranian frontier and hike mountain paths in northern Iraq, and Randal is (as he reminds us with a minimum of self-deprecation) getting a bit old for this sort of thing. But he makes light of the fact once or twice by stressing the deference that Kurds show to veteranhood. In a time of general boredom and indifference, too, he shows a becoming sense of involvement, as an American, in Turkey's disgraceful use of U.S. military aid and the CIA's employment of Kurds as disposable "assets."

The most stirring encounter in the book is the understanding formed between Randal and Abdul Rahman Qassemlou, leader of the Kurdish minority in Iran. Qassemlou had all the attributes of a potential national leader. He was not a tribal or religious or political sectarian, he had traveled widely and had a good ration of political experience (including in that great school of regional politics, ideological disillusionment), along with a sense of humor. Randal adds characteristically that he also had a taste for whiskey, and drank it on principle in order to show his contempt for the ayatollahs.

Refused entry to the United States for many years because of his leftist opinions, he had just been granted a visa by Washington in the summer of 1989. He and Randal celebrated in Paris, in fine style. Two days later, Qassemlou was lured to an apartment in Vienna by a purported offer of negotiations, and murdered in cold blood by some of Oliver North's Iranian moderates. About to break into a new world, and dragged back by the lethal and barbaric practices of an older one, Qassemlou was the emblematic Kurd. He and his people have been well-served by this finely wrought testimony of friendship.

Taking two steps back in Africa

OPINION
Michel Rocard

WHAT are the United Nations and the United States playing at? Last week came the news that the armed factions controlled by President Pascal Lissouba of Congo Brazzaville and those of his predecessor, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, had started shelling each other again in the capital, Brazzaville, and that the UN had just voted against sending a peacekeeping force to the country.

For four weeks, talks in the Gabonese capital, Libreville, between the two sides in Congo Brazzaville — initiated by Gabon's president, Omar Bongo, and conducted by the negotiator appointed by the UN and the Organisation of African Unity, Mohamed Sahnoun — had made little headway. The resumption of fighting had long been on the cards unless it could be prevented by an international force that put pressure on the two parties to come to the negotiating table.

At the beginning of July, Bongo — who was preparing November's conference of leaders of Lomé convention countries — invited me to Libreville in my capacity as president of the European Parliament's Committee on Development and Co-operation to discuss how the convention could be renewed.

It was clear that a "rethink on Africa" had become necessary, and this was an ideal occasion for it. When I arrived in Libreville on July 11, the city was buzzing with rumours about an imminent ceasefire between the warring factions in Congo Brazzaville.

Bongo and Sahnoun, like the French ambassador, had little else on their minds, and we hardly talked about the Lomé convention during my two-day visit.

The situation was clear. The ceasefire had been signed only as a result of international pressure. When, on July 12, the faxed ceasefire declaration arrived on Bongo's desk, the signatures of the two Congolese leaders at the foot of the document were accompanied by riders that clearly showed peace would be unlikely to follow the ceasefire. Everyone had half-expected this. An outside force was clearly necessary.

There were two possible solutions. The more unwieldy one would involve a UN peacekeeping force. Under UN colours, financed by member nations, and with a UN-appointed commander, such a force would have to be made up of contingents from volunteer nations. The procedure was familiar: it would need at least six weeks of negotiations, and would be hamstrung by the UN's financial crisis. But time was of the essence.

The other possible solution, which would be faster and less unwieldy, was a volunteer international force. It was something everyone had been considering. France was in favour, but did not want to form part of the force. It was generally agreed that the best solution would be a 700-strong African force for a three-month period.

Consultations had been going on. Bongo had persuaded President Abdou Diouf of Senegal to provide a 500-strong contingent and a commander. Namibia and Botswana were ready to top up the contingent.

It only remained for the force to be financed, which was something Africa could not do. Europe alone was capable of that. Bongo asked me to work to that end. France had said it would finance the transportation, but as a former colonial power it was unwilling to initiate the move. France's decision was right.

On my return from Libreville I made an appointment with Luxembourg's prime minister, Jean-Claude Juncker, current president of the European Union Council of Ministers. I also obtained the agreement of Belgium's prime minister, Jean-Luc Dehaene, that Brussels would contribute $1 million for the force (we needed $12 million — France had committed $3-4 million), and that it would be the first country to announce its intentions, so that negotiations on financing the operation could be kickstarted. I received the same pledge from the Netherlands. The European Commission stated it still had some "foreign and security policy" appropriations left. A deal was on the cards.

Juncker conducted the July 23 debate in the council of ministers brilliantly. A decision of principle was taken, after he had swept aside some British misgivings, and referred for implementation to the Permanent Representatives Committee. But international law had to be considered: no international force may act without the authorisation of the UN Security Council.

When asked unofficially two weeks earlier, various ambassadors on the Security Council had made it clear that they saw no problem, and that, as long as the force was well defined, its remit clear and its finance guaranteed, authorisation would take no more than a day. That at least was the impression gained by Bongo and Sahnoun from the many conversations they had had.

The matter was ready to come before the Security Council when I heard the startling news that certain ambassadors, in particular the US representative and the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, were looking again at the possibility of a UN peacekeeping force.

It also turned out that Senegal needed a few more days to reveal its planned participation. The Euro-African solution could have been on the road within a week. A "peacekeeping force", on the other hand, meant delaying the arrival of troops for at least two months.

The Security Council, dangerously, was taking its time precisely when time was running out. All that the warring factions needed to hear, before they started shooting again, was that they would not have to deal with an international force.

The ceasefire lasted just under four weeks — almost a miracle. But the resumption of fighting was inevitable. Naturally, the conditions under which authorisation for an outside force could be granted were not open to argument: that the ceasefire be observed, that serious talks should have begun, and that the airport should be under control. The first two conditions were met for more than three weeks, and the third could easily have been achieved. The Security Council practically waited for fighting to resume before it considered the matter, by which time the conditions were no longer being met. Technical and legal perfectionism had snuffed out a chance of peace.

I have only one interpretation of what occurred — one that unfortunately reminds me of what happened over Bosnia. It was clearly felt, in some quarters, to be unacceptable that Europe should show itself capable of acting effectively, either alone or with Africa. International law and the Security Council were used to foil a peace bid that was not US-led. I would be delighted for anyone to prove otherwise.

Michel Rocard, a former French prime minister, is currently a Socialist senator and MEP

(August 14)

pain's political parties turn on ETA ally

ie-Claude Decamps
adrid

HE groundswell of feeling against terrorist acts by ETA aratists remains high in Spain month after they murdered ir hostage, Miguel Angel Blanco. of came last week when all the ocratic Basque parties in Monon, an ETA stronghold, voted ust its mayor, a member of the nisation's political wing, Herri una (HB).

e government has moved to p the fight against terrorism break up the networks that ce ETA.

he government has also stiffened its sentencing policy on "terrorist acts". A man found guilty of throwing petrol bombs at police in Bilbao last December has just been given an 11-year jail sentence.

However, while the country wants to see an end to violence, the government's approach has not been unanimously approved. Its proposed lowering of the "penal" age from 18 to 16 for "terrorist acts" has caused an outcry. Several jurists have described it as an "anti-constitutional" and even "barbaric" measure — a view shared by the Socialist opposition, even though it generally approves the government's stance on ETA.

Many on the left have also pointed out that while there was some justification in the strategy of "isolating HB politically", which was approved by all the democratic parties, the government's attempt to "socially isolate" HB activists is pointless, particularly in the Basque Country, where families are politically divided down the middle.

Some of those who describe the strategy as counterproductive have even gone so far as to compare it to the Nazis' racism against the Jews. This prompted a sharp response from the prime minister, José Maria Aznar: "If there are any Nazis around, they're to be found in the ranks of ETA and their supporters in HB."

(August 10-11)


A Lapp family in traditional dress and setting

Norway's Lapps under fire

Benoit Peltier in Stockholm

NORWAY's future, as seen by Thorstein Johansen, is as dark as a polar winter. "If the Lapps go on enjoying different rights from other Norwegians," he says bluntly, "in 10 years' time it'll be like Bosnia — we'll be machine-gunning each other."

Johansen is standing as a candidate for the far-right Progress party in the general election on September 15 in a constituency in the far-northern county of Finnmark. It is there, in an area larger than Switzerland, that a good proportion of Norway's 40,000-60,000 Lapps live.

In an attempt to revive its flagging popularity in Finnmark, the Progress party, which is riding high in the rest of the country, has launched a campaign to woo the county's non-Lapp inhabitants, who are in the majority.

The party leader, Carl Ivar Hagen, has been canvassing there for the past few days, flanked by several of his parliamentary colleagues. Their main target for criticism has been the rights granted to Lapps, and in particular to their parliament, the Sametingot (the Lapp people call themselves Sami), which was elected for the first time in 1989.

Although primarily a consultative body, the Sametinget irks Hagen because, he claims, it may encourage similar ambitions among other "ethnic groups". "There are 12,000 Pakistanis in the city of Oslo alone, and 11,000 Vietnamese in the whole of the country," he says. "They too may demand their own elected assemblies."

If Hagen had his way, he would also wind up the government-appointed Committee for Lapp Rights. In a report it published last January, the committee argued that the Lapp minority should have a greater hand in the management of Finnmark's land and water, which are 96 per cent owned by the state. There is much at stake, given the region's mineral resources. Oslo is obliged to consult the Sametingen before allocating operating licences to mining companies.

Hagen deplores the fact that the Lapps, who live mainly from raising reindeer (there are 190,000 head of reindeer in Norway), get "too much" financial help from the government to pursue their age-old activity in a region where climatic conditions are very harsh.

"The problem with the Progress party is that it's exploiting the fact that Norwegians know very little about our history or way of life," says Sven Roald Nistoe, president of the Norwegian Lapp Federation.

The Lapp people, who are also found in Sweden, Finland and Russia, though in much smaller numbers, feel their traditional culture and identity are under threat from industrial and technological progress.

Johansen's outburst has not been condemned by Norway's other political parties. Nor has it caused the far right to become any less popular. According to the latest opinion polls, Hagen's party is well on the way to becoming the second-largest political movement in the country after the ruling Labour party: 20 per cent of those polled said they intended to vote for the Progress party, compared with 6.3 per cent at the 1993 general election.

(August 12)

Kabul stripped of its cultural treasures

Afghanistan is an archaeologist's paradise. But its carefully nurtured collection of antiques is vanishing, plundered by looters and sold to the West. Report by **Roland-Pierre Paringaux** and **Emmanuel de Roux**

THE archaeologist Nancy Dupree, who is based in Peshawar, the Pakistani city near the Afghan border that thrives on all kinds of trafficking, knows all too well that one of this century's great cultural disasters, the plundering of Kabul museum and its riches, continues apace. Yet she is helpless to do anything about it.

"A dealer came to see me yesterday for the second time in a year," she says. "He offered me a terracotta I knew well because I'd already held it in my hands. It broke my heart, but I had to give it back to him. The first time he had wanted $120,000 for it, and now he wanted $30,000. But how could I come up with the money? There probably won't be a third time."

Many people have simply given up. But Dupree, a tall American whose expression has lost none of its girlishness over the years, is still fighting for a culture to which she and her late husband devoted their lives — until the war destroyed everything.

Nancy Hatch Dupree's time in Afghanistan began with a double love affair. The country itself, a kingdom perched between the Himalayas and the steppes of Central Asia, immediately appealed to her when she arrived there in 1962 as a diplomat's wife.

Then she fell in love with Louis Dupree, an eminent American archaeologist whose work had eventually taken him to Afghanistan, a country that had long been the preserve of French archaeologists.

Nancy wrote a guidebook for the Afghan Tourist Office and gave her manuscript to Dupree to read. As she stood before the desk of the great man, she felt "as intimidated as a schoolgirl in front of her teacher", even though she was a graduate of Columbia university.

He handed back her manuscript without a word, after writing on it: "Correct but unoriginal." She turned on her heels and stomped out of the room, slamming the door. He ran after her, mumbled a few excuses and asked her to stay to lunch. They remained inseparable after that. She accompanied him on all his expeditions to Kandahar, Jalalabad and Mazar-e-Sharif.

Archaeologists dream of working in Afghanistan, a country which enjoys a unique location between Iran, India and China. For thousands of years, different civilisations were thrown into contact with each other there by the great invasions of Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, by major religions (Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam), and by caravans travelling along the Silk Road that linked the Mediterranean basin with China.

Century after century, fresh cultural strata and new treasures accumulated in Afghanistan's high mountain valleys. This process of cultural cross-fertilisation produced the Greco-Buddhist style that is characteristic of Gandhara statues, the treasures of Bagram, where Greco-Roman glassware rubs shoulders with Indian ivories, Persian gold objects and Chinese lacquer work, and the Islamic art of the kingdom of Herat, which is celebrated for its miniatures.

Those prodigious treasures began to emerge from the ground in the 1920s, thanks to the determination of the forward-looking King Amanullah, who gave the French archaeological delegation in Afghanistan exclusive excavation rights for a 30-year period.

During the inter-war years, the French excavated Bagram plain, north of Kabul, the prehistoric sites of Ai Khanum and Balk on the northern frontier, and the Buddhist valleys of Bamian, west of Kabul, and Hadda, near Jalalabad. Soon treasures that were to be divided up between France and Afghanistan began to fill Kabul museum, a brick building in the south of the city near the royal palace.

From 1949 on, the French were joined by other archaeological missions, and in particular by Louis Dupree's American team. There was an abundance of sites in Afghanistan. The sixties and seventies were halcyon years. Dupree, who specialised in prehistory, travelled the length and breadth of the country in his old red Land Rover, always accompanied by Nancy.

Unfortunately, storm clouds were gathering. Caught as it was, at the height of the cold war, between two powerful neighbours, the Soviet Union to the north and the United States' ally, Pakistan, to the east, Afghanistan had the greatest difficulty in maintaining its independence.

In April 1978, a communist regime came to power following a military coup. Louis Dupree was accused of being a CIA agent and briefly arrested. "In the eyes of the new regime there could be no other explanation for the length of his stay in Afghanistan," Nancy remembers with a shrug of the shoulders.

The Duprees went into exile in Pakistan, where they watched helplessly as the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and the country was sucked into a spiral of destruction that has continued ever since.

In 1992, after the defeat of the Red Army and the mojahedin's triumphant march into Kabul, the Duprees, like millions of other refugees, thought they would soon be able to return "home". Their moment of euphoria was shortlived. Very soon the warlords and ayatollahs that were sharing power began fighting among themselves and the situation degenerated into a full-blown civil war.

During the winter of 1994-95, the battle of Kabul reduced the south of the capital to rubble. In all those years of attack and counterattack, Kabul museum was repeatedly hit by rockets, set on fire and looted. "Not all the looters were illiterate mojahedin," Nancy says. "Some of them took their time to choose the finest items or those most in demand on the international market."

In September 1996, as the fundamentalist Taliban army tightened its stranglehold on Kabul, a handful of foreign volunteers drew up a list of items left in the devastated museum and took them to a hotel in Kabul's centre. The 275 crates packed into a few hotel rooms were all that remained of a museum whose great diversity owed a lot to half a century of international co-operation.

This last-minute operation rescued less than 20 per cent of the total collection and included many damaged items and pieces of minor importance. The museum's major treasures were almost all missing. Gone were the 1,700 pieces from Bagram, including several hundred second century carved ivory reliefs discovered by the French in 1939. Hundreds of Greco-Buddhist bronzes, ceramics and statues had disappeared. There was no trace of the museum's 35,000 gold and silver coins from Tepe Maranjan, Kunduz and Mir Zakah.

Nor was there any sign of the 20,000 "barbarian" gold objects and pieces of jewellery that made up the glorious Scythian Tilia Tepe treasure, which was excavated by an Afghan-Soviet team in 1978. They are thought to have been taken to the safety of a vault in the national bank. But despite repeated requests bank officials have refused to show them.



ILLUSTRATION: PIERRE LE TAN

A LARGE proportion of the museum's prize items have found their way discreetly into Pakistan. In a region where arms and opium trafficking is rife, they are easily smuggled across the border. After crossing "tribal territories" where there is no form of control, the pieces generally end up in Peshawar.

It is not unusual, in that city's bazaars and markets, to find items from the museum alongside crude forgeries. But the really choice pieces are to be found elsewhere, and you are not shown them unless you have the proper credentials.

One person who has them is John W, an antique dealer from London's Old Bond Street, who says he went to Peshawar "to help rescue the treasures of Kabul museum, and not out of any commercial motives". After being contacted at his hotel by a man who had been sent by a local politician, "a certain Mr Amin, who claimed to have been a minister", John W was taken after nightfall to a villa guarded by armed men.

After tea had been served and a few pleasantries exchanged, a man took "several dozen" Bagram ivories wrapped in pink toilet paper out of a suitcase. Some of them had been damaged. John W was flabbergasted, as there are known to be only a few hundred such ivories, and because Amin offered him the lot for $10 million.

He learnt shortly afterwards that General Nasirullah Khan Babar, who was Benazir Bhutto's interior minister at the time, possessed a collection of the priceless ivories.

This would seem to be confirmed by the experience of Dr H, a Pakistani art expert who lives in Islamabad: "One morning I was visited by General Babar. He showed me seven ivories that a dealer was offering him for $300,000. They were items from Kabul museum and I told him so. I have since heard that the pieces probably found their way to London or Tokyo."

When the general came on an official visit to Paris in 1996, he is alleged to have said, as he pored over the collection of Bagram ivories at the Musée Guimet: "Not bad, but the ones I've got at home are better!"

Benazir Bhutto, whose love of antiques is well known, is also under suspicion. A Pakistani academic says he accompanied her to Peshawar in 1996 to authenticate archaeological items from Afghanistan.

There was talk at the time of setting up an official fund to acquire the stolen antiques, so they could be returned to Afghanistan once peace was restored. Shortly afterwards, the Pakistani press reported rumours of an inquiry by the secret service into antique trafficking by people in Bhutto's cabinet.

The same academic says that, when he was invited to the villa of a prominent Muslim leader in Baluchistan province last year, he found himself face to face with several hundred antiques from the Afghan province of Herat. When he expressed surprise, his host told him he possessed "as many again in a Karachi warehouse which are on their way out of the country".

In 1996, the Islamabad-based Professor Hassan Dani was asked to examine 12 large Gandhara statues that had turned up in the Pakistani border region of Malakand. By the time he got there they had already gone abroad. John W confirmed last month that the pieces had in fact been seen on the market in London.

Professor Dani talks of "a veritable haemorrhage of the Afghan heritage". This is a view echoed by Nancy Dupree: "Everything is very well organised. The major pieces are buried in Afghanistan. Photographs of them are circulated among art dealers, collectors and diplomats. As soon as there's a buyer, they turn up in Peshawar. As they go from place to place everyone gets their cut." The pieces are then sent to unscrupulous dealers all over the world.

Not just Kabul and its museum have suffered: the whole of Afghanistan has been ransacked. In her Peshawar office, Dupree points to aerial photographs that show unauthorised excavations being carried out on several archaeological sites.

Some patches of land are pock-marked with craters which, for once, are not the result of bombing. "They are concessions sold by certain mojahedin leaders — it's like the Californian gold rush," she says.

PREHISTORIC sites such as Ai Khanum, Telia Tepe and Surkh Kota, which could provide clues that would make it possible to piece together Afghanistan's mutilated past, have been plundered in this way and, often, irreparably lost.

Despite this disastrous state of affairs, Dupree has refused to give up. She runs Acbar, a documentation centre whose purpose is to act as a memory bank for these troubled times, and supports Spach, an association for the protection of Afghanistan's cultural heritage. She travels all over the world to muster backing for such causes.

Dupree has been to Kabul to negotiate personally with the Taliban. She urges them to respect Afghanistan's pre-Islamic heritage and not make things worse by yielding to pressure from their most radical members, who would like to destroy what they regard as heathen works of art — Buddhist and Hindu statues and Bagram ivories depicting courtesans.

Despite the assurances she has received that nothing will happen to them, Dupree fears the worst for the two colossal Buddhas (55 and 38 metres high respectively) carved into cliffs in the valley of Bamian, a celebrated place of pilgrimage and staging post on the Silk Road, which is now used as an encampment by the soldiers of Islam. She is equally worried about the Greco-Buddhist site of Hadda, which was devastated by Soviet troops in the eighties and has now been looted again.

Nancy Dupree is also fighting for a cause that is more personal but just as sacred. She wants to obtain permission to have her husband, who died in 1989, buried in Afghanistan.

(July 31)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

Students have to decide between crash courses and a less stressful approach, says **George Bickerstaffe**

Long and short of choosing an MBA

THE Master of Business Administration is an American degree, and in the United States the course typically lasts for two years. So the MBA is a two-year degree — or is it? Well, no, not for most European students. The only leading universities offering two-year courses are are London Business School and Spain's IESE, in Barcelona.

Most others offer a programme ranging from 10 months — at Insead near Paris — to a year, at IMD in Lausanne. Even in the US, while there are no indications of major changes to the two-year standard, there has been much discussion of whether it needs to be that long.

One-year courses contain nearly all the elements of the two-year versions

Perhaps most significantly, Harvard Business School, which has offered the degree for longest, has introduced a course that is effectively 16 months long by running together four consecutive terms with no summer break.

But the Katz school, at the University of Pittsburgh, is the only leading US business establishment offering a European-style, 11-month MBA.

In the UK, Manchester Business School (MBS) — which, with London, was one of the country's first two such schools — opted for a shortened version of the two-year course before Harvard. Although MBS kept a two-year option, it introduced a new 16-month standard course and an even shorter, 12-month, fast-track version aimed at corporate high-fliers with significant academic and business skills.

MBS says it made the change after many students said two years was too long and that they lost career opportunities by spending so much time away from work.

Typically, two-year programmes are run over four terms of 13 to 14 weeks each.

Students use the long summer vacation between the two years to take on temporary jobs, or internships — which has become an increasingly important part of the search for jobs. It is this summer break that both Harvard and MBS have removed to produce their shorter programmes.

Many schools, especially in Europe, increasingly see internships as irrelevant. They can be important for students who want to change career tack to "try out" new industries. Such experience is often crucial for final job offers. But many of the schools regard it as an unassessed part of their curriculum over which they have little control.

Schools also insist that students do not need the temporary work because they have three years, or even more, of work experience before they begin their courses.

Equally, many doubt that the longer courses add anything academically. The time students spend face-to-face with teachers — and the ground covered — differs little whichever length course they take.

However, a two-year programme does allow more chance for reflection about future career moves and more opportunity to study disciplines in depth. It is also, of course, less stressful.

Proponents of two years argue that the longer time allows students to do more. Certainly, it allows a more relaxed and varied approach to optional subjects and more time for the all-important job hunt.

Yet one-year courses contain almost all the elements of the two-year versions, although sometimes with less choice of options. Students on shorter courses sometimes complain that they have little time to sample and enjoy the facilities of their schools.

However, they don't seem to think they receive a second-rate experience. Most like the "crash course" approach, the shorter break from their careers and the lower costs of studying.

One-year programmes are often more career-related and less divorced from the world of business than the two-year versions. Students tend to be less concerned with self-development and the pursuit of academic interests, and more with returning to work as soon as possible.

That is not to downgrade shorter programmes. The students still gain a thorough grounding in management. And it can be argued that the high pressure is a good preparation for business life, where time management and setting priorities are key skills.

Ultimately, there is probably little to choose between the two lengths of courses. Both provide an excellent education. What the would-be students want from an MBA course and what they are willing, or able, to pay are likely to be the determining factors.

Book ends . . . Should MBA courses run over one year or two?





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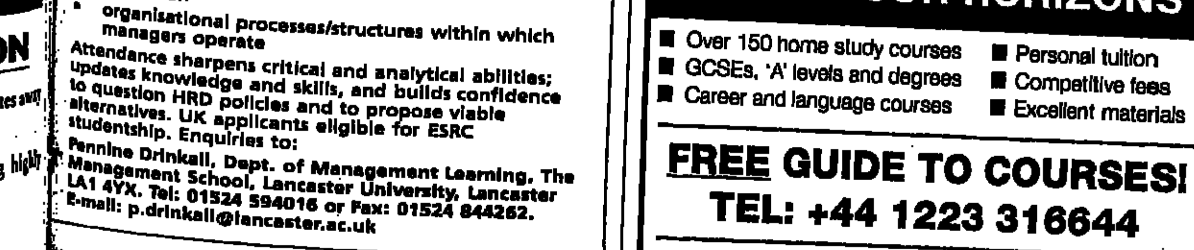
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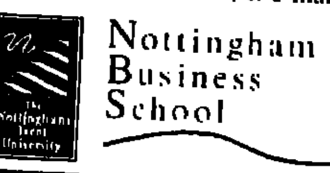
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(3) Able to develop capacity of field teams
(4) Ability to co-ordinate efficiently and effectively with different groups.

Applications close: Monday 22 September 1997. Provisional interview dates: 9 & 10 October 1997. Early November 1997 until 30 June 2000.

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Indonesia battered by currency storm as rupiah hits all-time low

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

INDONESIA became the latest casualty of the turbulence rocking southeast Asia's currency markets last week when the rupiah plunged 7 per cent to a record low against the US dollar.

The drop came after the government, seeking to end weeks of speculative pressure on the currency, scrapped its 12 per cent intervention band with the dollar, in effect allowing a free float.

Indonesia has fought a rearguard action against currency speculators, progressively widening the rupiah's trading band to try to fend off attacks that focused first on Thailand and then spread to the Philippines, Malaysia and even once solid Singapore.

Indonesia's action follows the example set by several of its neighbours. Thailand's decision on July 2 to float its currency cleared the way for the baht to slump by more than 20 per cent against the dollar.

Malaysia's ringgit and the Singapore dollar both dropped 1.5 per cent against the dollar last week when the Philippine peso and Taiwan dollar also looked weak.

Analysts broadly believe that the rupiah was not significantly overvalued, considering Indonesia's economic fundamentals. Trade was in surplus to the tune of $970 million in May, the current account deficit this year is likely to be under 4 per cent of gross domestic product and, as of May, foreign exchange reserves stood at $21 billion.

But economists also saw little merit in the government spending massively to prop up the rupiah against a jittery market. The only surprise is that the decision to float the rupiah came only a day after Bank Indonesia intervened heavily in currency markets — with rupiah purchases that traders estimate at over $200 million — in an attempt to turn the tables on dealers who had believed the announcement of a free float was imminent.

The downside of last week's float is that it will increase the cost of Indonesia's $55.5 billion plus in foreign debts and hit earnings of companies forced by mounting foreign currency debts to hedge their exposure.

Indonesia's biggest car producer Astra International revealed it had a dollar-denominated foreign debt of $1.6 billion and stood to lose the equivalent of 70 billion rupiahs as a result of the currency's plunge.

Richard Baum adds: China continued its assault on corruption and speculation on its stock exchanges last week when the securities regulator took central control of the Shanghai and Shenzhen markets.

It is part of a crackdown that has seen the government suspend shares and fine leading local brokerages for manipulating prices. Analysts say the government is trying to show foreign investors the markets meet international standards.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission took control of the exchanges from local governments following a cabinet order to reinforce its authority over the markets. It also replaced the head of the Shanghai exchange.

In Brief

SHARES in London and New York crashed as investors took fright that the stock market's long bull run was coming to an end. Wall Street plunged nearly 250 points — its second biggest loss — and the FTSE 100 fell 125 points, its third biggest one-day fall. The London market recovered some losses after the release of better than expected figures for the UK public sector borrowing requirement.

TOUGH new investment rules have been imposed by the UK Securities and Investments Board in an attempt to avoid a repetition of the $290 million Morgan Grenfell scandal.

THE Australian government has cleared the way for Cable & Wireless to take control of Optus Communications, the country's second-largest telecom and cable TV group.

NAUTICAL Archaeology and International Aid and Development, a project to develop "green" tourism in the Third World, has fallen victim to a $250,000 swindle based on "standby letters of credit".

BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster, stunned the City when it warned that its meteoric profits growth was unlikely to continue.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates August 18	Sterling rates August 11
Australia	2.1793-2.1819	2.1553-2.1581
Austria	20.64-20.66	20.74-20.76
Belgium	60.62-60.86	60.00-61.00
Canada	2.2362-2.2381	2.2155-2.2177
Denmark	11.17-11.18	11.22-11.23
France	9.89-9.90	9.93-9.94
Germany	2.9343-2.9368	2.9484-2.9510
Hong Kong	12.46-12.47	12.31-12.32
Ireland	1.0956-1.0976	1.1048-1.1071
Italy	2.866-2.869	2.876-2.889
Japan	189.65-189.77	183.03-184.21
Netherlands	3.3044-3.3070	3.3219-3.3248
New Zealand	2.5009-2.5047	2.4750-2.4793
Norway	12.22-12.23	12.12-12.14
Portugal	297.62-297.92	[illegible]
Spain	248.02-248.24	[illegible]
Sweden	[illegible]	[illegible]
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USA	[illegible]	[illegible]
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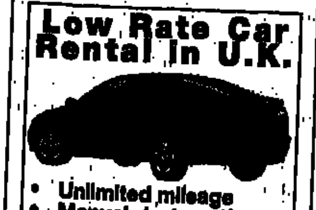
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GUARDIAN WEEKLY
August 24 1997

Tide of opinion turns against oil explorers

Greenpeace is taking on the oil giants in a new battle for the Atlantic. High stakes are involved, writes **John Vidal**

FORCE seven winds and choppy seas buffeting the oil drilling platform Stena Dee barely affect the 28,000-tonne craft as it makes stately progress to BP's Foinaven oilfield west of Shetland.

But the small, yellow, hi-tech "pod" containing Greenpeace activists that was attached limpet-like to one of the legs of its vast superstructure last week was an irritant that the oil industry can do without.

So far the battle for the Atlantic frontier and its undeveloped fields has been fairly well behaved. The islet of Rockall has been occupied and several seismic exploring boats have been turned off course by Greenpeace swimmers.

But, despite BP's attempt to portray the latest action as little more than a nuisance, the occupation of the Stena Dee and the arrival of a second Greenpeace boat raised the stakes considerably.

It was no surprise, therefore, last Sunday when the protest ended in the arrest of a group of Greenpeace activists. As the protesters prepared to leave the rig because, according to Greenpeace, "safety could no longer be guaranteed", police moved in and took four of them to Aberdeen.

"It looks as if the police took some tough action, but I wouldn't say they stormed the rig," a Greenpeace spokesman said.

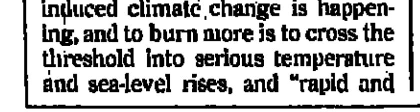
BP said four protesters "were met by police officers and the matter is now in their hands".

The stakes are high for everyone. Greenpeace is taking on the world's largest industry and several governments whose immediate interests are more than ever entwined with oil money. The Atlantic frontier, centred on Rockall and Shetland, is the great hope of 30 oil companies, led by BP and Shell. It requires leading-edge technology for deep, rough waters that are harder to drill than the North Sea or even Alaska.

If the Atlantic frontier areas newly licensed by the UK are as oil-rich as expected, there could be enough oil to keep the world in petrol and plastics for 30 years.

But put the Stena Dee battle in a global context. The Atlantic frontier is just one part of a great oil rush. The $50 trillion-a-year industry is opening as fast as it can vast new fields in South America, Azerbaijan and all points east.

Proven reserves, Greenpeace says, are being found at the rate of two barrels for every one used, even though oil use has increased almost every year for three decades. The prospects of the shortages that dominated the 1970s are negligible in today's political and trading climate.



The scale is massive, the effect potentially disastrous. The world's leading climate scientists believe the world can afford to burn about 225 billion tonnes of carbon — primarily oil, gas and coal. Man-induced climate change is happening, and to burn more is to cross the threshold into serious temperature and sea-level rises, and "rapid and unpredictable ecosystem damage", Greenpeace says.



The carbon equation means that 95 per cent of all the fossil fuels thought to exist should not be mined, it adds. That means that 75 per cent of the reserves already earmarked for extraction must be left in the ground. Obsessive exploration for more oil is flying in the face of sanity. The shift away from carbon dependence to an economy based on, say, solar power, must start now, Greenpeace concludes.

But Edward Morse, publisher of the New York-based Energy Intelligence Group, says oil companies have long had a self-referring, individualistic culture. He writes in this month's Index On Censorship: "The industry's aversion to regulation is bred in the bone. It fought the clean-up of toxic wastes, the campaigns for lower emission levels and alternative fuels, the introduction of double-hull tankers, the disposal of obsolete platforms . . . [The industry] remains parochial and insular."

It has also fought the very concept of climate change, instinctively using its influence with government to obstruct global agreements on the subject.

Nevertheless it is an uncertain and divided industry that Greenpeace is squaring up to. The activities of Shell in Nigeria, BP, Occidental, Conoco and others in the Andean states of South America, illustrate how oil acts as a destabilising political force and a motor for social dissent and global insecurity. The industry, if not corrupt itself, has long been the travelling companion of corrupt regimes, Mr Morse says.

As this becomes more evident, so the industry's image is slipping in its primary market. An industry-commissioned Mori survey reveals that its reputation has declined in 20 years, from more than 70 per cent approval to 32 per cent today.

Some companies are trying to paint themselves as responsible, but this means addressing the political and social questions they have long avoided. As they move from outright denial of climate change to reluctant acceptance, so they are forced to ask if it is even possible to move away from the oil-based economy. Great gaps are appearing in their arguments and in their ranks.

While Esso denies climate change is happening, Shell is asking once-heretical questions. Heinz Rothermuns, managing director of Shell Expro, says: "How far is it sensible to explore for and develop new hydrocarbon reserves given that the atmosphere may not be able to cope with the greenhouse gases that will emanate from the utilisation of the hydrocarbon reserves discovered already? Undoubtedly it is a dilemma."



Platform for debate . . . Greenpeace's pod clings like a limpet to BP's Stena Dee oil rig PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SIMMS

Greenpeace has latched on to the industry's fissures. "The companies are flagrantly hypocritical," says Robbie Kellner of Greenpeace in London. "Their new rhetoric and acceptance of climate change is contradicted by their massive efforts to explore for new oil. These are the companies with precisely the financial and technical resources needed to shift the way we use energy."

The same charge of hypocrisy is levelled against the British government, which wants to find more oil, yet use less.

Tony Blair said in a letter to Lord Melchett, Greenpeace UK's executive director: "We are determined to move the UK more quickly down the path of sustainable development. On climate change, I believe the Government and Greenpeace share many of the same aims . . . On your specific argument for development of the Atlantic oilfields, if we did that, demand for oil would be met from production elsewhere at a cost to the UK in terms of jobs and balance of payments, and possibly to the global environment."

The British government has given the companies working the North Atlantic a royalty-free deal that will bring nothing to the Exchequer, and it has reduced corporation tax on their profits. Labour has appointed an oil man, Lord Simon, as minister of competitiveness in Europe and, rubbing salt into the wound, has joined 22 of the largest oil companies to fight Greenpeace's claims that the last round of oil licences in the Atlantic Frontier by-passed European environmental directives.

Next month's High Court fight on that last issue is believed to be the first time that government and industry have worked together so publicly and powerfully in the courts against a charity.

It also signals that the industry is using all its influence with friends in government before December's Kyoto climate summit that will attempt to set new targets to combat global warming.

The stakes are huge for Greenpeace, which will commit up to 50 per cent of its UK financial and human resources to challenging the industry in the north Atlantic over the next few years.

Certainly, last Sunday's events have done nothing to weaken its resolve. "Efforts to stop the expansion of oil will continue," it declares.

160 km
Faröe Islands
Stena Dee
Foinaven oilfield
Shetland
Orkney

Some oil companies are trying to paint themselves as responsible. As they move from outright denial of climate change to reluctant acceptance, so they are forced to ask if it is even possible to move away from the oil-based economy

Voice of devotion

OBITUARY
Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan

THE WORLD of music has been stunned by the sudden death, at the age of 48, of this immensely popular Pakistani singer of Islamic devotional music.

Nusrat belonged to a family of musicians. His father and uncle, Fateh and Mubarik Ali, were great singers of Northern India from the 1930s onwards, travelling from village to town in bullock carts and entrancing peasant and feudal lords alike with their *qawwalis* — devotional songs designed to promote a mystical union between the individual and his God.

Their popularity was largely due to the fact that they gave the poetry of the Punjab's Sufi mystics a new twist by integrating it with their knowledge of the *ragas* (melodic moods) of traditional North Indian classical music.

This was not blind devotion, but one which required inner knowledge, which could only be achieved through ecstatic dancing and, according to some, through the trance-like state that comes with sexual union. Scepticism and doubt were openly preached.

The Sufi poets of the Punjab were medieval bards whose work agonised rulers and the orthodox. Though the Sufis were Muslims by birth, their work transcended all religious barriers and, in essence, was the most perfect reflection of the Punjab and its peasants.

The beauty of the verse is such that 136 quatrains from the work of the 12th century Sufi Baba Faid al-Din Masud can be found in the Guru Granth, the holy book of the Sikhs.

This was Nusrat's world. His family was from Jullundur, but moved to Pakistan after Partition in 1947. Nusrat was born a year later in Lahore. He was trained to sing classical ragas and Sufi poetry as a child. His father died when he was 16, and Nusrat found himself being courted and promoted as the successor to the great master.

Nusrat rendered the novel and mysterious Sufi poems sublime with his sad, troubled and tender voice. The simplicity of feeling always shone through. His uniqueness lay in the fact that he revived an old tradition but gave it a modern twist which made his music universal. It could be heard and appreciated all over the world, and requests for him to write the scores for films turned into a flood.

He did some of them — Natural Born Killers, Dead Man Walking, The Last Temptation Of Christ, Bandit Queen — but his own concerts had begun to tax his health.

Two years ago, while in California, he was advised to have an immediate kidney transplant. His close friends remain bewildered as to why this was not done at the time.

Nusrat is no more. A voice familiar on heaven and earth has fallen silent. But there can be no separation. His music and his voice will live for ever and occasionally tear our hearts with a single, salty tear.

He leaves a wife and two daughters.

Tariq Ali

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, musician, born July 12, 1948; died August 16, 1997

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Plane sailing . . . the wall outside the world's most beautiful hangar PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

Foster's cloister of flight

Jonathan Glancey

WHEN Inigo Jones was commissioned to design St Paul's church in Covent Garden, he promised his client the "handsomest barn" in Christendom. The British have always had a gift for making buildings with lofty functions engagingly modest, and utilitarian buildings handsome. The great tithe barns of medieval England are noble examples.

Sir Norman Foster's American Air Force Museum at Duxford, a little to the south of Cambridge, opened last month: it follows in this functional tradition and is, perhaps, the most beautiful aircraft hangar yet built.

Aircraft hangar? Yes. Foster's $14 million building is the latest wing of the Imperial War Museum's impressive aircraft collection, visited by at least 400,000 people a year. The 20 or so machines hung from the concrete ceiling of the great hangar were once scattered in a jumble of old sheds and in danger of crumbling. Gathered together under Foster's muscular arch, they make a magnificent sight. Seen together, these grounded war-hawks are the stuff of myth. Mechanical dragons. Piston-engined Harpies. Jet-powered Valkyries. Biplanes and spy-planes, dive-bombers and carpet-bombers, they appear to circle the sinister and herculean B-52 bomber around which Foster has drawn the circumference of the building. It's an impressive sight.

Even more impressive is the way you can look out across the B-52 and over the bristling guns of its predecessors and see, through the huge window that forms the one wall of the hangar, veteran aircraft being put through their aerial paces outside.

Duxford is the very opposite of a static museum. It's a working aerodrome and, throughout the summer, visitors are entertained, terrified or plain bored by second world war fighters and Korean war jets simulating dogfights in the big Cambridgeshire sky above.

Foster's genius has been to shape a building that connects the static aircraft gathered in the new building with their flying cousins outside it. More than this, he has designed one of the grandest, yet most modest, of museums. The hangar is calm and dignified. One end is dug into the ground and covered with grass, the other is a giant glazed arch. The architects have refrained from kitting the building out with stylised details drawn from aircraft design, much to the benefit of the overall design.

For Foster, the building is, inevitably, a favourite. Sir Norman is a keen pilot and has an extensive knowledge of the Duxford collection.

The museum is a stepping stone in the redirection of English architecture towards a refined functional tradition after nearly two decades of fashionable whimsy. It's a must while the summer lasts, even for those sceptics who feel that its aircraft are nothing more than dangerous boys' toys. These machines represent the fine line we all tread, or fly, between life and death, and Foster's temple is a suitable place to contemplate their chilling and timeless message.

Letter from Burma Louise Benne

Wrestling for attention

IT WAS a carnival day in Wethali, a warm-up for the annual hot season highlight, the water festival of Thingyan. Smoke from burning rice paddies hung low and bathers at the town water tank were dry almost before they had time to swap dampened modesty sarongs for their festival best. The road into town was dotted with young families, the children and women with their faces decorated with patterns of *thanaka*, a paste of sandalwood-like bark.

The women wore the bright reds and pinks characteristic of this area. The men wore more sombre *lungis*, the sarong almost universally worn by Burmese males. A steady stream of people went to pay their respects to the serene Great Image of Su Taung Prai, a six-metre Buddha image made from a single piece of stone, allegedly dating back to the 4th century. Scattered around are the remains of the civilisation that produced it, often known as Vesali, which flourished until the 8th century. The image is sheltered by a corrugated iron shed, although its setting, underneath a giant, brilliant-red silk umbrella, decorated with a profusion of astrological signs, provides an impressive ambience.

Central among the festival events was the wrestling. On an area of harvested, flattened paddy, whose rough rice stalks had more than one contestant ruefully studying his cut feet, was a scene that brought eerie echoes of the past. In nearby Mrauk U — the capital during the region's great era, when Rakhine warlords terrorised much of India and central Burma — in the cool winding halls of Shittaung temple, among lines and lines of bas reliefs depicting everyday and religious life, there is one striking picture of head-to-head wrestlers, frozen forever in strained battle.

Back in Wethali, a place that is a sometimes uneasy blend of south-east and west Asia, the team of referees, older men with battered, sun-blackened faces, were in control. They darted in and out of the contest, keeping a close eye on the teenagers, who often showed signs of getting out of control — temper and ego likely to produce a fight rather than a contest. But overall control rested with the village headman, his megaphone a singular modern touch, backed by a line of local dignitaries who were seated in rows of careful hierarchy.

There were monks and senior men in white jackets with curious yellow turbans tied in flowery bows on the side. The remainder of the audience squatted in the dust in a rough ring around the contest.

But the wrestling was not the only centre of attention. When the contest got dull, the crowd swelled towards a group of small stands featuring an amazing range of gambling. This is a far from rich village, but there was certainly plenty of money flying around to bet on the blink of an eye or the twist of a hand.

The other, unofficial contest was among the women. Their informal, but none the less intense, contest was cooking. They were mainly young women backed by middle-aged mothers, and they were selling trays of local delicacies. Sitting demurely, chatting with their mothers, it was not too hard to guess what prize the athletes were chasing.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

HOW, exactly, is sea level measured?

SEA level is most accurately measured for the whole globe by radar beamed from satellites. They have shown the existence of hills and valleys in the sea. For instance, the Sargasso Sea stands higher by about a metre above the rest of the Atlantic Ocean. This is partly because the water there is warm and, being less dense, stands taller to balance the colder water elsewhere; and partly because the winds and the current of water westwards along the Tropic of Cancer pile the water up on North and Central America. — *Paul Murdin, British National Space Centre, London*

WHICH country has the easiest driving test?

IN SOUTH Dakota, USA, in the 1950s, the day I turned 15, I walked to the county courthouse, paid 50 cents, signed a declaration that I was not blind, and received my full drivers permit. — *Tibor Pollerman, Schrollbach, Germany*

IN VENEZUELA, when you take the written test, there is a person who reads out the right answers in a loud voice. When you take the driving test, the person in charge asks you: "Did you drive that car all the way here?" "Of course," you say. Then he takes the test slip, stamps a seal, signs it and off you go. — *José Manuel Hernández, Caracas, Venezuela*

WHAT are the chances of the Year-2000 computer-date problem causing worldwide economic meltdown?

THE chances of a worldwide economic meltdown as a result of the year-2000 problem (Y2K) are extremely high. Analysis of computer-industry publications would indicate that Y2K is a non-problem. The industry wants to sell hardware and software. It is not interested in selling Y2K repair while its factories sit idle. Consequently, there are many who have not yet become alert to the true nature of the worldwide problem.

Because our systems are mutually dependent, a flaw in one system can produce failure in another system that is ostensibly repaired. This leads us to the conclusion that the failure of interlocking systems would be a major probability even if we had started much earlier to repair systems. — *Jerome and Marilyn Murray, Tucson, Arizona, USA*

ALL that will happen on January 1, 2000, is that many consultants will happily grin while looking at their bank statements, swollen by the substantial additional income resulting from the artificial scare they contributed to creating. All vendors of packaged software are offering standard solutions. As for old in-house programmed systems, expanding the date field from six to eight digits is a simple task. Several times I have managed the expansion of amount fields in hyper-inflationary countries, a job similar to changing the date fields. If the world comes to an end in 2000, computer programs will not be the cause. — *Carlos Kasis, Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Any answers?

WHAT is the derivation of the expression "nitty gritty"? — *Paul Clark, Silverdale, Lancashire*

YOU recently reported that we share "98 per cent of our genetic makeup" with pygmy chimpanzees. What proportion of my genetic makeup do I share with any member of the human race? — *Brian Easton, Wellington, New Zealand*

WHY is the "hash key" on a telephone so called? — *Peter Loosemore, Wakefield*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/

A Country Diary

Phil Gates

WEARDALE: We didn't notice the threat of rain until we saw puffs of pollen drifting from the flower heads of cock'sfoot grass, as the first raindrops struck them. Too late, we realised that the thundery cloud hanging over Wolsingham Park Moor was moving deceptively fast. The sun disappeared and a curtain of rain swept across the meadow as we raced for the shelter of the hedgerow trees. The thin canopy of the old ashes made a leaky umbrella, so we were forced to scramble up the slippery bank, through campions and meadowsweet, and huddle close to the trunk. Thunder rolled around the hills. Within minutes the footpath below had become a stream. A small furry refugee from the downpour — probably a bank vole — dashed from between the Yorkshire fog and clover stems and into a hole under the tree roots. We resigned ourselves to a soaking, as rivulets of water trickled down the ash trunk and fat droplets falling from branches splashed on our shoulders. Not a sign of a break in the clouds. In the field behind, a hay crop had already been cut and left in a sweeping pattern of swathes that had been almost dry. Flat plates of elder blossom, heads bowed under the weight of water droplets, emitted a drowsy scent in the humid air. From somewhere in the bushes nearby we could hear the soft fluting of bullfinches above the patter of rain on leaves.

Then there was a patch of brightness above, the rain eased, and the flood on the footpath slowed to a trickle. The summer storm finished as suddenly as it has begun. As we slithered down the muddy bank the startled pair of bullfinches bounded away, and swallows reappeared, hawking for insects over the uncut meadow.

Oasis break the drought

POP
Caroline Sullivan

NOEL GALLAGHER is often said to be his own greatest admirer, but for once the Oasis songwriter was being modest when he described the forthcoming third album as "more pub-rock bollocks". Pub-rock perhaps, in so far as Oasis have maintained their traditional guitar/bass/drums trajectory. Bollocks? Decidedly not, unless you believe that guitar and voice inadequately express the heart and soul.

Be Here Now hones to perfection everything now recognised as Oasis trademarks: the idiotically catchy hooklines, often brazenly drawing on the Beatles; Liam Gallagher's raw vocals, a reminder of what rock is supposed to be about; the clumsy lyrics that for all their faults still burrow into the subconscious. When 250,000 sang along to Wonderwall at their concert at Knebworth, how many were worried that the words don't mean anything? Noel Gallagher may not be up to Lennonist wordplay, but his memorable catchphrases — what is a champagne supernova, anyway? — are the mark of a truly populist songwriter.

If Definitely Maybe was the group at their yob-rockin'est and (What's The Story) Morning Glory? revealed a softer side, Be Here Now is the confident amalgamation of the two. Now at home with the idea of strings, horns and big juicy Wonderwall-style arrangements, Oasis are a band fulfilling their early promise.

Be Here Now captures Oasis as a united front at the peak of their powers. They'd have to be to carry off a record as big as this. Be Here Now is monolithic, with hardly a track coming in at under six minutes and All Around The World, whose exuberant chorus, "It's gonna be OK", is curiously moving, clocking in at nine. It's also monolithic in feel, the guitars screaming up front, bass and drums laying down a stomping foundation, Liam in full mad-for-it mode.

The album starts with the single D'You Know What I Mean?, which opens with the sound of bomber jets streaking past. It's pleasant to imagine Noel intending them as a metaphor for the band conquering the few bits of the globe they've missed. It's more likely he just fancied the sound, as he fancied the trumpets, violins and whatever on other songs.

He's not one for cryptic messages — if Liam ever faked his own death, it's unlikely Noel would litter songs with Sgt Pepper-esque "clues". You don't have to dig too deeply to work out that Be Here Now is mostly about how the band's lives have changed since becoming the biggest thing in Spice Girldom. My Big Mouth, the industrial strength rocker following D'You Know, is Noel reflecting on the trouble caused by his habit of mouthing off about drugs, etc.

Be Here Now validates most if not all of the Gallaghers' boasts about their greatness. It's not an especially original work, but it proves that old sounds can yield new meanings if pasted together cunningly enough.

It also shows Liam to be this country's best rock vocalist, gifted with Lennon's arrogance and Van Morrison's soulfulness. Far from being the "footnote" predicted a year ago by the Daily Telegraph, Oasis are writing the history of 1990s pop to suit themselves.

Software symphony

Dan Glaister reports on claims that Mozart has been reborn . . . in a box

SALIERI would be seething with jealousy. The composer who, according to playwright Peter Shaffer's Amadeus, spent his working life trying to emulate Mozart, has been beaten to it by a computer.

A computer program developed by Santa Cruz university has already received the first performance of one of its compositions, it emerged last week. Mozart's 42nd symphony was performed in April. Mozart only wrote 41 symphonies.

The computer program, dubbed Experiments in Musical Intelligence, is nothing if not prolific. In three months it has produced 5,000 works, including 1,500 symphonies and 2,000 piano sonatas.

The program's creator, David Cope, told the magazine New Scientist: "There's no expert in the world who could say for certain that it's not Mozart."

The program works by identifying a musical pattern that is interpreted as the composer's signature. Examples of music are sifted for tell-tale sequences that are repeated in different pieces. These signature phrases are then inserted into a composition at the point where the real composer would have used them.

EMI has not been content merely to imitate Mozart. New works by by Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, Chopin and Rachmaninov have also been churned out.

Critics argue that the computer cannot capture the essence of a composer's spirit. Cognitive scientist Douglas Hofstadter said: "EMI has no model whatsoever of life experiences, has no sense of itself, has no sense of Chopin, has never heard a note of music, has no trace in it of where I think music comes from. I'm comparing that with an entire human soul, one forged by the struggles and travails of life, and all the experiences that create emotion: turmoil, excitement, hope, despair, resignation, everything you want to think of that goes into building a character."

All revved up . . . Sandra Bullock reaches terminal velocity in Speed 2

Way off the pace

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

ITS been a hard summer for film critics, desperately dreaming up adjectives to describe the expensive silly season products and then, despite our best efforts at gentle denigration, finding those products taking vast box-office returns. Are we the real dinosaurs of The Lost World of intelligent film-making? Come August, it sure seems so.

Some products haven't gathered a fortune. One of them is Jan De Bont's **Speed 2: Cruise Control**, which substitutes a runaway liner for an out-of-control bus, Jason Patric for Keanu Reeves's LAPD hero and Willem Dafoe for Dennis Hopper's villain. Sandra Bullock is still there, but I bet she now wishes she wasn't.

Bullock is invited on a Caribbean cruise by her new boyfriend Patric, who hopes to propose. It all goes swimmingly at first, though the enforced jollity made me glad when Dafoe appears; mad as a hatter and intent on ruining everybody's fun. He was an expert for the cruise line but got copper poisoning and was sacked. Now he fixes leeches on his chest in the hope that they'll suck it out of him. He fixes explosives up all over the place and incapacitates the liner's steering so that it will run straight into an oil tanker.

Stunt follows stunt, and they are what people call state-of-the-art, though art has nothing to do with it in this baleful case: 75 stunt persons are listed on the credits, but only two writers. If it had been the other way around, we'd have had a more satisfactory movie.

Speed 2 has no real logic, characters or dramatic tension. I'm sure Mr De Bont is a good action director, but will someone find him a script before Speed 3 hits us slap in the navel? Please.

Satyajit Ray, the great Indian director, once took me into his bedroom, pulled a large trunk out from under his bed and opened it to show me the dozens of trophies he'd won.

His fame was well-deserved. But even now, the Indian cinema is still characterised in the West as either the classical Ray or Bollywood absurdity. It's like saying American cinema is either Scorsese or trash. In fact, the half-century of independence has produced a large assemblage of talent.

Even so, Ritwik Ghatak, whose 1960 masterpiece **The Cloud-Capped Star** has now been revived, was perhaps the only director to compare with Ray. He did not, however, have a trunk of trophies under his bed, though you might well have found a half-drunk bottle of whisky there.

Ghatak's career straddled independence and partition, and the latter, which he hated since his roots were in that part of Bengal which then became foreign territory, led him both to films and to alcohol. He died aged 51 after completing eight features, a miracle considering his addiction and the public's incomprehensible lack of appreciation.

The Cloud-Capped Star is the story of a middle-class refugee family, victims of partition, struggling for survival in the outskirts of late fifties Calcutta: Nita (Supriya Choudhury) is the breadwinner and the central character. The odyssey of her small life is the subject of a film which is quietly realist but fiery and emotional.

Ghatak's cinema was much angrier than Ray's but equally sensitive. It's Ibsen rather than Chekhov, as befits the Marxist humanist he was.

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Retribution guaranteed

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

COSTAS and Candy joined an exclusive London health club which briskly justified its name by excluding them. The reason is imperfectly clear. It might perhaps be something to do with Costas's latest business venture, the National Condom Hotline. Costas's condoms come in a wide range of flavours: lager and lime and curry ("which isn't going down very well"). There is even one which glows in the dark. He has three other businesses. Really, I hardly like to ask.

Instead of welcoming this wonderful excuse for avoiding exercise, Costas and Candy brooded. Candy was particularly broody ("Candy's extremely big on revenge"). So they called in three unlikely lads ("I suppose we're like the A-Team") to get their own back on the club. The A-Team put what passed for their heads together and came up with a corker.

Dawn ("Twenty-two stone roly poly artiste") was sent to the club to cause a big splash ("Make sure you get kicked out in complete and utter style"). Costas and Candy got their money's worth though we weren't told how much it cost Costas.

Costas and Candy were the first people we saw in V for Vengeance (Inside Story, BBC1). At the time you thought you'd hit rock-bottom early, but the time would come when you'd remember them with tenderness.

I was rather partial to Kenny ("Retribution guaranteed"), an old-fashioned East End villain, who clearly left his native Glasgow in something of a hurry, carrying only his accent. Oblivious to the whirligig of time and the invention of the wheel, Kenny is still making a primitive living whacking things with baseball bats. He reminded you of a rhino's head on a wall. Dangerous once.

He laid out his stall. "The kind of things I get asked to do, they run the range from Superglue someone's door up, put dog shit through their letterbox, blow up the car with the wife and kids in it. It is," mused Kenny, "a weird planet. There's always going to be people that are not happy." His business, he said with some regret, was mostly word of mouth. "I would like it to be a bit more direct because if a man's gonna pay, say four grand, by the time it reaches me and everybody's had a drink, I might end up with two and a half. But then again, if it's funny enough, I'll do it for 50 quid." When people do get hit with baseball bats the result is not so funny.

Elizabeth Litchfield, jilted by Stuart Peters, brought in a hitman to bludgeon him half to death. For four days he crawled around his house, drifting in and out of consciousness, while the answerphone chattered anxiously away ("I get worried what's gone wrong. Is it something I've done?") He is now brain-damaged. "I'm fortunate I've got a good partner in Daphne. She cares for me," he said in a breaking voice. He believes Elizabeth will come looking for him when she gets out of jail. "She's one hell of a revengeful woman." Every single person interviewed who had sought revenge or dreamed of doing it was a woman.

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Emperor's new clothes

Everyone wants to see great visual art, so why haven't the festival's curators cottoned on, asks **Adrian Searle**

THE Edinburgh Festival is, essentially, a festival of live art, of performances of one sort or another. This truly international jamboree has declined, once again, to take contemporary art seriously, even though its different forms have more to say to one another than ever, and even though this is a time when artists happily cross over from one medium to another, unconcerned by the definition of traditional categories. The visual arts — from painting and sculpting to video and film work, performance and installation — are no longer marginal activities in relation to their bums-on-seats, theatrical, musical and comedy cousins. The fact is, away from the festival, more and more people like contemporary art, while fewer and fewer go to the theatre.

Those hungry to see the latest and liveliest international art will be disappointed. Living art (as opposed to live art) is the ghost at the Edinburgh banquet, not so much a Fringe as a few unplucked nostril-hairs away from being invisible.

But there's always the portraiture of that most "Scottish" of painters (as the exhibition catalogue has it), Sir Thomas Raeburn, at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and the flower arrangements and swags, the Merchant Ivory pop-up book exhibition devoted to John Singer Sargent and Lady Agnew at the National Gallery of Scotland. Both these shows are all very well in their way, though Sargent's is unpleasantly tarted up with costume-drama clutter. I sense the dead hand of gallery director Timothy Clifford at work here, with his ghastly ideas in gallery decoration. With Clifford in Edinburgh, and Julian Spalding lording it over Glasgow, Scotland has the pick of the daftest gallery directors in Europe.

Gabrielle Keiller, golf champion, wartime ambulance driver, widowed heiress of marmalade magnate Alexander Keiller (distinguished archaeologist, saviour of the stone circles of Avebury and collector of books on witchcraft to boot) was, most significantly, a collector of Surrealist and Dadaist art. Keiller's collection has been donated to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, which already holds the Roland Penrose collection, and the gallery now has a unique, in-depth collection.

Keiller's collection is as wonderful as it is unlikely, including three great Magrittes, a fabulous Francis Picabia and a terrific collection of books, some of which are extremely pornographic. We only get to see glimpses (a murderous Masson orgy, some marbleised end-papers). Keiller also collected Francis Bacon, Bruce Maclean, Ian Hamilton Finlay and far too many works by Eduardo Paolozzi. In my view, Paolozzi is an over-blown lightweight, and most of his sculptures are rotten. He is to have a centre devoted to his oeuvre, installed in a new extension over the road from the museum, which at least means we will have the choice whether to go and look at the things or not.

Keiller's eye for the modern was nothing to her acumen in purchasing Surrealism and Dada (and, with a further surreal twist, ceramic and silver cows). The museum first showed Keiller's collection in 1988, and could, this time, have mounted a full-blown Surrealist and Dada show from its holdings. Instead, we get a selection from her collection, and a catalogue devoted as much to the collector as to what she bought.

There's a fairly pointless archive show of Gerhard Richter's multiples at the Fruitmarket Gallery, all courtesy of dealer Anthony d'Offay's back-room holdings, and the Portfolio Gallery is showing Calum Colvin. Colvin took his family on their hols to Lloret del Mar on the Costa Brava a while ago, and photographed the sprawling, seething piles of sunbathers on the beach of this despoiled fishing village. The photos have been digitally manipulated, and an extruded glob of sun-oiled and burned Northern European flesh smears its way, Terminator-style, through the computer collages. Colvin, like many artists who use computers, doesn't know when to stop, and is overly seduced by his hi-tech medium and its clever-clever possibilities. But you can pick up a Colvin mouse-mat and a name-tag badge here, if you like that kind of thing.

La Representation (1937), one of three Magrittes in the Gabrielle Keiller collection

Inverlieth House, in the middle of the Botanic Gardens, has mounted the only significant contemporary art show of the festival. Selected by American curator David Moos, Theories Of The Decorative — Abstraction And Ornament In Contemporary Painting may have a ponderous title but the quiet, day-lit rooms have been impeccably installed with works by painters from the United States, Germany, Brazil, Argentina and Spain. Phillip Taaffe's stencilled silk-screened images of ferns, stems and leaves, registered, misregistered, enlarged and reversed on the canvas are the high point. Much of the rest deals with painting as rhetoric — Ingo Meller's loaded, straight-from-the-tube swipes on raw, unstretched canvas, Lesley Wayne's peeled-back, shredded layers of paint, Beatriz Milhazes, with her Matissean moments, lacy mandalas, and bad sixties wall paper designs.

David Reed interrupts film stills of Jimmy Stewart and Kim Novak in Hitchcock's Vertigo with writhing, meaningless doodle-swipes and corpuscles, test-card colour bars and cool, painted blips. The painting becomes a frieze, going right round the room. Reed's work makes you think about how we daydream in the movies and in art galleries, about how our attention wanders and comes back again, has lapses and concentrated spells, ornamental thoughts and decorative moments. At least you feel alive, and, here and there, there's even someone smiling.

Skin divers induce gasps

CIRCUS
Lyn Gardner

***IT IS* a perfect 10 for Acrobat, an astonishing Aussie troupe performing at the Edinburgh Assembly Rooms who defy gravity and good taste with a show that is the antidote to all those soft-focus circuses such as Cirque de Soleil.**

Their little pink fuschia haircuts may make them look like startled bantam chicks, but there is nothing soft and comfortable about these highly skilled acrobats who fly through the air with nipples erect and make aggressive love while hanging by one foot from a trapeze.

We do not advise that you try out these stunts at home.

The parade of bare buttocks and men in frocks and nurses' uniforms is often more Carry On than anything else, and the company makes much sly use of comedy, particularly when guy-[illegible]udomasochistic practices.

But there is no doubting the sense of sexual menace in a piece in which physical daring becomes a metaphor for living life to the very edge — in every sense.

On a stage on which a television set constantly flickers and a drummer and an electric guitarist pump up the volume, the three-minute culture rules as the troupe constantly raises the stakes like seasoned poker players, daring each other on to greater and more dangerous feats.

In a show that is so hot that it's cool, it is excess that breeds success.



Sorry love, this is the gents . . . Acrobat *in flagrante delicto*

A Measure too measured

THEATRE
Michael Billington

IN THEORY, it sounds marvellous: getting a brilliant young French director to stage Shakespeare's most complex play with British actors. In reality, Stephane Braunschweig's Measure For Measure — a Nottingham Playhouse production which occupies Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum for the bulk of the festival — is less striking piece of cross-fertilisation than curate's egg: exciting visuals and bright ideas mixed with a dictation-speed delivery that drags the play out to three-and-a-half hours and works against the actors' natural rhythm.

Braunschweig certainly thinks big. His set, which he designed himself, is a vast revolving cylinder which opens up to reveal echoing chambers or precipitous staircases up which characters are forced to pelt, no more actor-friendly than the steep slopes which marked out his 1994 Winter's Tale but operatically impressive.

The director has also clearly revolved in his own mind the ideas about justice, mercy, power and government that lie at the heart of this tricky masterpiece. What one notices is how the characters are set a series of moral tests which they either pass or fail.

In a richly uneasy opening we see the tremulous, modern-suited Angelo being handed, quite literally, the sword and scales of justice by the teasingly peremptory Duke. And when the Duke later withholds the crucial information that Isabella's brother, Claudio, has not, in fact, been executed; it seems less a piece of mental sadism than part of the prolonged ethics exam which all the characters face.

Behind Braunschweig's production also lies the idea that mankind's aspirations to purity are constantly at war with his animal impulses.

Thus we see Angelo, in a moment of Miltyesque fantasy, decked out in black angelic wings shortly before his attempted seduction of Isabella. And the errant Claudio is deliberately made up to resemble the figure of the banished Adam from the Masaccio painting that adorns Angelo's office.

But, while the production is clearly the work of an interesting philosophic mind, it lacks the cinematic fluency we expect in modern Shakespeare. Rather than melt into each other, scenes are divided up by the onward march of the revolve. And the text, instead of being delivered with the witty playfulness that bespeaks understanding, is often spoken with a heavy deliberation that suggests it is part of a Berlitz comprehension test, something, you feel, that is alien to the actors themselves.

This Measure, in short, is too measured: 20 minutes needs to be shaved off it before it progresses to Nottingham and a European tour. But there is already a hugely promising Isabella from Lise Stevenson, who throws herself at Angelo with indecent fervour and who is so filled with spiritual pride that she cannot understand the temptations of the flesh. Pride is also the keynote of Paul Brennen's sober-suited Angelo, smugly congratulating himself on his own gravity, and could be said to be the motivating force behind Jim Hooper's mischievously smirking Duke, who seems positively to relish putting other people through the moral mincer.

The low-life scenes fail to come off: no hint of corruption bubbling and boiling in the Viennese stew or of anarchy lurking under the surface. The pace is often snail-slow. And yet there is enough intelligence behind Braunschweig's production to make it work provided the actors are given their head and allowed to impose their own rhythms on what currently looks like an exercise in Gallic cerebration.

Pork of the town

Marie Darrieussecq's first novel has taken France by storm. She chews the fat with **Marianne Brace**

WHEN she was six, Marie Darrieussecq watched a pig being slaughtered. "It's archaic, the technique," she explains. "The pig understands what is going to happen. It screams. They tear its throat, the blood is terrible. Then, with a big knife, they open the belly and the intestines go out. I was struck by the whitish blue colour. It's incredible, terrible."

Incredible and terrible are words that might equally be applied to the content of Darrieussecq's debut novel, Pig Tales, in which a woman finds herself turning into a sow. Set in an apocalyptic future, the novel is narrated by a nameless bit of crackling who works in a perfume shop-cum-brothel. During the course of the book, she grows teats, gives birth to stillborn piglets, is sodomised, gang-raped, abused with dogs, almost eaten. She finds her soul when she falls in love with Yvan, a werewolf.

This pork-fest took France by storm when it was published under the title Truismes (a pun on truism, a self-evident truth or cliché, and truie, a female pig). Its author, now aged 28, sent her unsolicited manuscript to six publishers. In 24 hours, it had been accepted. The most successful debut novel in France since Françoise Sagan's Bonjour Tristesse, Pig Tales has sold 250,000 copies in hardback. It was number one on the bestseller list for 28 weeks; 30 countries have bought it; the film rights have been snapped up by director Jean-Luc Godard.

Pig Tales has been called the first anti-Le Pen novel; a radical feminist fable; an immature porno shocker. The author's insouciance seems gallingly Gallic. "It's just a novel. I have no message," she declares. "I propose the reader that story. I expect the reader to think and make his own moral. A book is made by two people."

Born in Bayonne ("city of ham"), Darrieussecq is the only child of a teacher and a nuclear power worker. She was brought up in a small village where they bought milk and meat from the local farms. It was here that she witnessed the pig's death and where her mother had the unfortunate idea of getting her pupils to write to their English pen friends about how to kill a pig and cook it — an episode that almost sparked a "diplomatic incident," Darrieussecq says, laughing. "The Newcastle people thought: 'Who are these savages?' "

After school, Darrieussecq won a place at the highly competitive Ecole Normale Superieure in Paris. When she took her finals, she came sixth in the whole country.

She wrote Pig Tales in six weeks, during a period of strikes in 1995. "There was no metro, no buses. People talked to each other. It was a hard time, but a time of joy and madness. There was an atmosphere of incredible freedom — revolution. And we love revolution," she says smiling. "This atmosphere went into the book."

The story goes that Darrieussecq looked in the mirror one day and tried to imagine herself with trotters. What would she feel if her skin got thicker and pinker, her nose flatter, her ears larger? "I found the idea strange, funny and shocking. A pig is contrary to all that is demanded of a woman. It's fat, ugly, obscene, dirty."

The blurb on the back of Pig Tales calls it "hysterically entertaining". There are moments of black humour ("We had dinner delivered regularly. I ate the pizza, Yvan ate the pizza man"), but the sexual violence makes it disturbing. The narrator is so innocent or stupid that she gratefully accepts the perverse punishments meted out to her.

"What interested me was the naive voice," Darrieussecq says. "In the beginning, she is alienated, an object of consumption, and she doesn't realise. She can't spell the word prostitute, doesn't know that's what she is. That is both funny and terrible."

What she wanted to attack was dogma. Her fascist politicians are "a blend of Le Pen, Berlusconi and New Age crazy people". It hasn't gone down well with extremists, or Catholics, who don't care for the sexual freedom allowed Miss Piggy, who enjoys her degradations.

"You can have your own pleasure in any situation. When she discovers pleasure, it's unexpected because she is in a humiliating situation. We've been through an interesting century; our grandmothers didn't have the Pill or abortion, they had restricted sexuality. Then we had the Pill and were obliged to experiment. That was another sort of dogma. Now there is Aids."

Unlike her contemporary Alina Reyes, whose erotic novel The Butcher was published in Britain six years ago, Darrieussecq isn't explicit. But had Pig Tales been written by a man, the degradation would have been considered unacceptably misogynistic. "It couldn't have been written by a man," she says emphatically. "I was worried it could have been read as an insult to women. We are not expected to write such things, but women have the right not always to be politically correct."

AS FOR censorship, she is against it "completely, completely. I rely on education. If education is well done, you can have a totally free country". But what about the freedom to enjoy, say, child pornography? "I am against censorship in any sense. You can make society safe through education, so children are not raped. I wouldn't like to censor comics or drawings about child pornography, as long as a real child is not raped. That's the frontier between fiction and reality."

It's a frontier as academic as her own education, as fantastical as the idea of a woman turning into a pig. What's in no doubt is that Pig Tales' success has allowed Darrieussecq to buy her own flat in central Paris. And how about pigs? Does she still eat pork? "Oh yes," she says with amusement. "I love Bayonne ham. It's the best in the world."

Pig Tales is published by Faber & Faber at £9.99

Marie Darrieussecq: hugely successful debut PHOTO: DAVID SILLITOE

Stars are in the West

Maya Jaggi reports on the dilemma facing Indian authors in search of fame

SINCE Salman Rushdie's Booker prize-winning Midnight's Children (1981) kicked open doors — both for Western readers and for other Indian writers remoulding English to their own ends — Indian novelists have continued to sweep prizes and bestseller lists. Milestones have been the big advances and matching sales of Vikram Seth's A Suitable Boy (1993) and Arundhati Roy's The God Of Small Things.

Yet which Indian novels find their way into British bookshops, and who has a hand in shaping them?

Most novels read in the West as "Indian fiction" — whether by authors living in India or elsewhere — have been acquired, edited and published first in Britain or North America. Of the glittering crop of the 1980s and '90s — Rushdie, Seth, Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Chandra, Amit Chaudhuri, Firdaus Kanga — virtually all made their breakthrough in the West, and gained Indian editions (and readers in India) almost as an afterthought.

"Most Indian writers don't come to us through Indian publishers but through British and American agents," says Matthew Evans, chairman of Faber. "British publishing is still the heart of Indian writing that has an international reputation."

During the Raj, the metropolis was the gateway for aspiring writers, and it helped to have friends — as T S Eliot was for G V Desani or Graham Greene for R K Narayan. Fifty years on, although India is the third-largest English-language publisher after Britain and the US (with educational books the backbone), fiction publishing is in its infancy. There are no literary agents in India, few advances for fiction, and though publishing thrives in regional languages, the English-language market is small. For Penguin India, the country's chief fiction publisher, good sales start at 2,000; a title becomes a "bestseller" at only 10,000. The publisher, David Davidar, says: "There's only one commercial Indian writer, Shobha Dé. With 30,000 copies on average, she outsells the next closest three to one."

No Indian writer in English can make a living without foreign publishers. HarperCollins India is beginning to pay advances, but its head, R K Mehra, says: "It'll be 10 to 15 years before we can compete."

So what does it matter where novels get published? Much Indian writing is, after all, emanating from the diaspora. Yet might the primary market influence literary output? And are diaspora stars eclipsing those with poorer access? What might be slipping through the net?

"It's an ordeal to publish in the UK," says Pankaj Mishra, who first bought The God Of Small Things in India, bucking the trend. "The sheer cost of sending a manuscript deters many." He adds: "UK publishers are interested in a certain kind of novel, presenting India as a totality . . . That drowns quieter voices — though some would always escape the filter."

"We've gone beyond the crude exotic," says the Delhi-based writer Githa Hariharan. "But there's a tendency towards certain themes — the Partition, the Emergency — exploring Indian identity, rather than taking it for granted."

Perhaps the most glaring gap is in translations. While Rushdie's recent Vintage Anthology Of Indian Writing champions the supremacy of an "Indo-Anglian" canon (as distinct from Anglo-Indian, or mixed-race descent), many writers would demur. And whatever the shortcomings of translation, British publishers are notoriously unwilling to trust screeners or take risks.

There are signs of change. Independent English-language presses, such as Kali, Seagull and IndiaInk, are growing in number. A Suitable Boy and The God Of Small Things both sold Indian rights first, and were given primary editing in Delhi. "Top-rate writers are making a statement by being published first in India," says Tarun Tejpal, co-founder of IndiaInk, launched this year with The God Of Small Things. Tejpal is optimistic about an untapped market in India's burgeoning upper-middle class.

"There's been a mental block among Western publishers to buying rights from Indian publishers," says Naveen Kishore of Seagull in Calcutta. With little money to groom and retain good editors, Indian publishers have been bad at screening out dross — a reputation that also puts off the best authors. But scepticism will subside as publishing improves.

Economic realities, though, remain. "If you're a writer, the money is in the West," says the Delhi novelist Mukul Kesavan. "The metropolis of Indian writing in English is elsewhere — big bucks, big prizes, a bigger world."

WHILE THAT means Western publishers will keep a hand in the final editing, Indian editors are increasingly involved. For today's writers, resistance to glossing for foreign consumption that can be crucial. Davidar worked with Seth on A Suitable Boy, with Orion line-editor pitching in from London. "We shared ideas," says Davidar. "An Indian book is best edited in India. We didn't want it over-explanatory."

Along with a spreading bookshop chain, Crossword, the industry has been boosted by a media spotlight. Tejpal, a former literary editor of India Today, sees greater cachet being attached to literary success. "We do take our cues from the West, but not blindly," he says, citing a lukewarm response to novels by Mistry and Seth that had been lauded abroad.

Pankaj Mishra, who is to head the New Delhi branch office of a London agency, says: "India is producing at a fair average some world-class writers; it makes sense to catch them young. The advances in India are so low, no agent could make a living on their own. But we can offer editorial support."

Matthew Evans compares the state of Indian publishing to Australia's 10 years ago. "As it develops, writers will want to be published at home first" — perhaps creating space for the generations after Midnight's children to flourish.

Dried and trusted history

Norman Stone

A History of the Twentieth Century: Volume One 1900-1933
by Martin Gilbert
HarperCollins 927pp £30

IT IS interesting to contrast this turn-of-century with the last, in the later 1890s. Near-futurology, now, is a bit of a bore because we are all used to endless technical progress, and were more interested in the space-station where the Russian pulled the plug than in those Mars landscapes. But futurology in 1900 was another matter: "The Shock of the New" in everything, from Einstein's physics to tower-block architecture, Picasso and, if you take it seriously, Freud. In 1900, intelligent observers saw that socialism, in some form or other — there was a French book on Australia, called Socialism Without The Doctrine — would become the established form. Nowadays, we are not so sure: "The Shock of the New" has had its day, and the century ends in bewilderment.

Apart from the world wars, actual political events can be stupefyingly boring, and as to social matters, the record of progress is also, however worthy, tedious, whereas technological advances can only be properly described by a popularising genius such as Bronowski. Before 1945, the record is improbable, surreal: Hitler and Mussolini appearing out of two of the world's most advanced and sophisticated countries. After 1945, it is a grey old business.

In my experience, the books that really tell you something are the opinionated, even bigoted ones, provided that they are well written. Eric Hobsbawm wrote one; so did Paul Johnson. Malcolm Muggeridge's The Thirties is another classic. The alternative method is Martin Gilbert's, which is by now tried and tested over more than 60 books, in defiance of critics who have complained that it is history with the fun and the thought left out. He is writing a huge history of the century, which proceeds chronologically, year by year, without overall judgments being offered.

This first volume on the 20th century covers the Boer war to Hitler's accession. It is a genuinely world-wide book, in that China and Japan, and of course the US, are all adequately covered. India gets a decent share. Africa less so. This is not a book with villains and heroes, and it is, for my own taste, far too English and truth-in-the-middle about some things. A large part of 20th century history can, I think, be summed up by the sentence "the Germans went ape", and many Germans agree (as I believe Kaiser Wilhelm himself would have done).

But when war breaks out in 1914, Gilbert underrates the craziness that was at work in Berlin. In the same way, he does not write with adequate power about the great slump of 1929-33, which wrecked political economies and, for the next 50 years, put the advocates of sound finance and private enterprise on a demoralising defensive. Still, such is the Gilbert method, and his many books will, as long as factual reference plays a role, have their place.

Gilbert has three very obvious virtues. He writes clearly, and will explain for a bright novice what was happening at, say, the Battle of Verdun in 1916. He is also, at least in anything I know about, accurate — although, for example, I do not believe, at least without qualification or a reference, that, in 1916, the police would have used truncheons to stop people speaking Czech in the streets of Prague.

But finally, if Gilbert is aiming at an encyclopaedic status, then he has been very successful. There are a great many anecdotes and pieces of information that you would not easily find in a shorter book; he is rather good on the Middle East, and that time of hope before 1914 when the Ottoman Empire seemed to offer a home for all of its peoples, with a Stamboul Greek as minister for religions (and Ben Gurion offering to raise a Jewish Legion to fight for the Turks).

On one difficult factual point, thanks are due. A desperately vapid and inaccurate book has come my way about Turkey, and it claimed that the Battle of Kut el Amara, which the British lost in Mesopotamia in 1916 (it was one of those truly terrible British muddles, in which troops marched across hot sands in rubber shoes that melted into their feet) had cost more than the much more famous defeat at Gallipoli. Of course it did not: 25,000 men were involved at Kut, whereas 10 times as many were withdrawn after the failure at Gallipoli. My Britannica does not reveal this, but Gilbert does. There is unquestionably a place for a book of this type.

Gilbert has marshalled his team, and his state-of-the-art writing devices, to very good effect. One day he must tell us what he really thinks, but this will do to be going on with.

Those who live by the swordfish . . .

Philip Marsden

The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Man Against the Sea
by Sebastian Junger
Fourth Estate 240pp £14.99

TO ANYONE taking to the sea this August — whether they are surfers, swimmers, yachtsmen, rod-and-liners, scallop-dredgers, trawlermen, tanker crews or ferry passengers — I would say: read this book. Not because it is a warning of the sudden perils of the sea (which it is). Nor because it is a mine of marine love (which it is). Nor even because it is a gripping story, grippingly told (which it certainly is). But simply because it serves as witness to a fact which we all know, but is rarely so well conveyed: that of all the things on the surface of our planet, the sea is by far the largest.

The Perfect Storm is the story of a once-in-a-century storm which hit the waters off the east coast of the United States in October, 1991. It follows in particular the course of the unfortunate Andrea Gail, a swordfishing boat working out of the town of Gloucester.

Sebastian Junger has done a great deal of leg-work in the town — interviewing the crew's friends and family, the other fishermen, and putting in the hours in the brawl-struck bars around the quay. He has also picked the brains of weather men, marine experts and rescue teams and his text is full of didactic asides about weather, waves, swordfish and emergency drills.

With any other subject, such a narrative technique might have jarred. But as in Moby Dick and Melville's encyclopaedic whale chapters, both Junger's story and his facts are linked by a sense of awe for the power of the sea and its other-worldly creatures. Swordfishing itself, as practised off the Massachusetts coast, can be a lucrative business. (We tend to forget on this side of the Atlantic, with talk of quotas and decommissioning, that there are people who make a lot of money from fishing.) After a month at sea, a swordfish boat might return with 15 tons of fish. For this, the owner can gross upwards of $140,000.

The boats use long-lines, up to 40 miles of monofilament line trailing behind the boat. Every 30 feet or so is a squid-baited hook on a seven-fathom trace. Because the swordfish feed at night, each hook is illuminated by a small chemical light. If the line breaks, it can be recovered by a series of reflector buoys and transmitters dotted along its length. When you have $20,000 of gear in the water, you don't want to lose it.

The big returns bring big risks. It is a spectacularly dangerous occupation — per capita, no other job in the United States has a higher death rate than fishing on boats like this; and for a fishing skipper, each decision — from fitting out the boat to timing a trip — is a straight pay-off between the safety of his boat and crew and the possible yield.

No one knows exactly what informed the decisions of the skipper of the Andrea Gail on his return journey in October, 1991. Given the scale of the storm, he could have done little once the boat was in the thick of it. Junger, in his lean, deadpan prose, reconstructs not only the circumstances that might have sunk her — the possible broaching, the pooping, the rolling over — but also what the crew might have been doing at the time, their immediate reaction, and in macabre medical detail what exactly happens to a drowning man. (If you want to know: first it's voluntary apnoea — about 87 seconds of not breathing, then involuntary apnoea when the lungs fill with water; or, alternatively, you might have a laryngospasm whereby an involuntary contraction around the larynx suffocates you. cold water, which instantly slows the metabolism, can delay death by up to 40 or 50 minutes.)

With equal thoroughness, Junger gives an account of the storm itself. An anti-cyclone, swelling east from the Great Lakes, happened to collide with Hurricane Grace. The result was a wall of weather, along which sped winds of up to 100 knots. Over the shallower waters of the Grand Banks, the wind created waves which not only topped 100ft but were steepened and made chaotic by the shoals. It was here that the storm met the Andrea Gail returning home with a hold full of fish. All that was found of her were a few oil drums.

There were other casualties in the storm — perhaps the most dramatic sequence of Junger's story is of the ditching of one of the Air National Guard's rescue helicopters. Unable to secure a mid-air refuel because of the wind, the crew were forced to jump from it, at night, into the sea.

Two details stand out from the story (not the least of Junger's skills is his eye for graphic details). One of the crew, about to jump from the hovering craft, looked back at the altimeter to see it flickering wildly between 10ft and 80ft as the waves rolled through below him.

Later the same night, another crew member, bouncing about in the swells, dying, was saddened above all by the thought that he had not managed to mow the lawn for the last time before winter. Unlike those on the Andrea Gail, this man was rescued and therefore able to tell Junger his tale.

The Perfect Storm is a magnificent sea-yarn. With the spare, declarative style of the best thriller-writers, Sebastian Junger builds his story piece by piece. But his is a true story and all the more compelling for that. Already a bestseller in the United States, it deserves to storm other shores too.

If you would like to order this book at the special price of £11 contact CultureShop

For those in peril on the sea . . . PHOTO: JEAN GAUMY/MAGNUM

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

The Cast Iron Shore, by Linda Grant (Picador, £6.99)

I ALWAYS get asked at parties if I can recommend any good books. As I am about to open my mouth my questioner then adds, Apart from, that is, books by St Augustine, Galileo, or 900 Chinese poets. You know, a novel? A nice, fat novel that you can read on holiday and isn't stupid? This has stumped me until now. For here, in this story about a half-Jewish Liverpudlian fashion-obsessed woman who becomes a communist in post-war America, is all the fat, intelligent novel you could want. Written so beautifully smoothly that tearing yourself away from it in order to eat or sleep is something of a wrench. You might also find yourself sniffling at the end. Happy hols.

English Country Pubs, by Derry Brabbs (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £8.99)

VERY much on the same ground as Weidenfeld's book Village Pubs (also £8.99), although that book was written by Roger Protz, beer legend, and also took you into the interiors. Still, when one is feeling too lazy to read a brainy book, and if circumstances prevent you from actually going to a pub, you could do worse than flip through this book at pictures of pubs, and dream.

The New Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock & Roll (Simon & Schuster, £14.99)

THE BIBLE is still M C Strong's The Great Rock Discography (Canongate), but this isn't too bad. You only hear about records released in America, but there's still a surprising amount of attention paid to Brit acts. There's a curiously literalist house rule which means that bands with non-plural names are referred to as "it" (as in "Teenage Fanclub's witty pop songs . . . gained it a college-radio following"). Oh, I don't know. I just thought you'd be interested.

Prophet of Orthodoxy: The Wisdom of G K Chesterton, ed Russell Sparkes (Fount, £7.99)

SELECTION of his non-fiction writings with an over-long introduction. That Fount is the religious imprint of HarperCollins may account for the cheapskate production values (no index, lousy editing) but at least you get the chance to read some of GKC's essays. "It was Huxley and Herbert Spencer and Bradlaugh [atheist MP, was refused seat when he refused to swear an oath] who brought me back to orthodox theology." Does one read GKC now in order to bolster one's agnosticism, or to make one feel like C S Lewis's Screwtape?

Fruits of Victorian labour

Mark Cocker



THE scientific name for wild marjoram, *Origanum*, derives from two Greek words, *oros* meaning mountain and *ganos* meaning joy. At the old Narborough railway track, where the plant was growing in extraordinary profusion, there was certainly no hint of a mountain. The derelict line simply bulged above the wider arable flats of west Norfolk with the subdued contour and slightly mysterious presence of an ancient burial mound.

Ganos, however, was here in abundance, unfolding in a massive, untidy carpet of mixed purple, mauve and pink, up one side then down the other. And amongst the marjoram's coarser pile were shorter, dense patches of purple thyme, bands of St John's wort, thick clumps of kidney vetch. This was also a butterfly's heaven and 16 species swarmed to the aromatic blooms for nectar.

At the edges of the old track, where the grazing rabbits had failed to make an impact, robust stands of dog rose scrambled into thick, pink-flowered mounds, then subsided down the embankment. Between these bushes was one of the rarer plants we had hoped to find. Pyramidal orchids have dense layers of overlapping petals which create neat arrowheads of dark magenta, sometimes so perfectly formed they look as if they might have been sculpted by hand. But there's the beauty of these orchids, and of Narborough as a whole. Nobody planned this to be the magical spot it is. It was created in the absence of human intention, an exquisite product of pure chance.

We visited another famous flower site, Sissinghurst, during the same week and were able to compare the two. This Kent garden, created by the writers, Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson, is renowned as one of the most beautiful in England. We admired the hard work and strenuously ordered vision of Sissinghurst, but its components inspired a synthetic pleasure lasting only as long as you were in the presence of the place itself. Narborough, quite simply, was exhilarating and remained with us long after we departed. However, one of the deeper reflections the place inspired was not quite so comforting.

Most environmentalists (myself included) are conditioned to view change to the landscape as potentially threatening to its scenic and biological importance. Change that involves replacing natural features with industrial elements is automatically condemned as outright destruction. The passionate opposition currently mounted in Britain to road construction typifies this response. Very often the campaigns are perfectly justified, but Narborough adds a disconcerting rider to the environmentalist's argument.

The 19th century equivalent of today's road-building programme was the construction of the Victorian railway network, which enmeshed the countryside in a disfiguring web of clinker, pitch-soaked sleepers, steel and coal smoke. Yet today, especially in the barley and beet agro-industrial wastes of East Anglia, the abandoned railway lines now represent some of the last vestiges of an older, more complex countryside. The flower-rich embankments at Narborough have probably not been disturbed since Victorian workers dug the chalk soils to build them. The workers' efforts were as important to the wildlife of the region as anything performed by its current army of professional conservationists. The fact is that a good deal of what we value in the countryside is a product of historical activity we would now either condemn or even outlaw.

Narborough tells us that we shouldn't always try to place nature in cotton wool and seal her behind a glass cabinet. That kind of appreciation often involves preserving beauty by pushing a pin through its thorax.

Chess Leonard Barden

HARRIET HUNT'S gold medal was the highlight of the world junior open and girls championships at Zagan, Poland. Britain's 19-year-old No 2, who starts her natural sciences course at Cambridge university this autumn, is the most promising woman player in western Europe, but was seeded only eight at Zagan against a phalanx of ex-Soviets.

She won six of her last seven games by imaginative play — ranging from a 23-move attack to an 81-move endgame — and finished the tournament a point clear of her nearest rivals. A Western victory in this event is so rare that the last British success was in 1937 by Elaine Saunders (now Pritchard).

The unsung initial spark to Hunt's talent was a teacher at Oxford High School, who insisted, as a condition of taking the job, that she taught her nine-year-olds chess for an hour a week. Since then, Hunt has won national titles against boys, silver and bronze in world under-14 and under-18 girls, and bronze for the England's women's team. Earlier this month she competed in the Smith & Williamson British Championship at Hove against the UK's leading grandmasters.

Hunt v Temirova

1 e4 d5 A dubious choice of opening by the inexperienced player from Turkmenistan.

2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qa5 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nf3 c6 6 Bc4 Bf5 7 Bd2 Varying from Anand's 7 Ne5 e6 8 g4. **Qc7 8 Qe2 e6 9 0-0-0 Nbd7 10 Ne5 Nxe5 11 dxe5 Nd5 12 g4!** Advancing the K-side pawns is the most troublesome plan for Black. **Nxc3 13 Bxc3 Bg6 14 f4 Be7 15 Rhf1 b5 16 Bb3 Qc8 17 f5!** The typical breakthrough, with Black's king still stranded midboard.

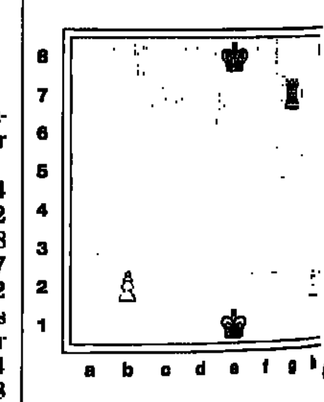
exf5 18 e6 Bg5+ 19 Kb1 f6 20 gxf5 a5 21 a4 b4 22 Bd4 Rb8 23 Bc5 Rb7 24 fxg6 hxg6 25 e7 Resigns. If Rd7 26 Be6 is crushing.

Richard Bates, aged 19, began the World Junior with 4/7 against highly-rated GMs and IMs before fading. His victory over the No seed Maris Krakops was a typical tournament dogfight, in which the 2530-rated Latvian tried flashy tactics to advance a pawn to the seventh and chase the white king around the back line. Bates kept cool and his eye on the ball, a queen-bishop line-up on Krakops's king; suddenly, the Latvian, trying for mate, was himself mated.

Bates v Krakops

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 h3 0-0 6 Bg5 Nbd7 7 Nf3 e5 8 d5 a5 9 g4 Nc5 10 Nd2 c6 11 Qf3 a4 12 Rg1 b6 13 Be3 Qa5 14 Rc1 a3 15 b3 Bd7 16 g5 hxg5 17 Bxg5 Nh5 18 Be7 Rfc8 19 Bxd6 Nf4 20 h4 cxd5 21 Nxd5 Nxd5 22 exd5 Bh6 23 Rc2 Nxb3!? 24 Qxb3 Ba4 25 Qc3 Bxc2 26 Qxc2 e4 27 Kd1 Bxd2 28 Qxd2 Qb6 29 Be5 Qb1+ 30 Qc1 Qxa2 31 Ke1 Re8 32 Bd4 e3 33 fxe3 Qh2 34 Rg4 a2 35 Ba1 Qh1 36 Qc3 Resigns.

No 2486



White mates in six moves, against any defence. A rook move, b4 or 1 h4 all look plausible, but only one way works.

No 2485: 1 Rg8+ Kh7 2 Qe3 (Rxg6 Rd6! is a draw) Rd6 3 Rh8+ Kg7 (Kxh8 4 Qxh6 mate) 4 Qd4+ Kf6 5 Qh4+ Kg7 6 Rh7+ soon mates.

Quick crossword no. 380

Across

5 Raptor, US emblem (4,5)
8 Raptor — try to sell! (4)
9 Protection from harm, theft, etc (8)
10 Raptor — magician (6)
11 Settle down snugly (6)
13 Township near Johannesburg (6)
15 Dark and cheerless (6)
16 Crime-fighters of many nations (8)
18 Raptor — can be flown (4)
19 Raptor, literally wanderer (9)

Down

1 Oxford colour (4,4)
2 High probability (4,2)
3 Raptor such as 10 or 19 (6)
4 Indistinct group? (4)
6 Mixture (of diced vegetables) (9)
7 Deadlock — no win situation (9)
12 Outrageous (8)
14 Raptor, fish-eater (6)
15 In large quantities (6)
17 Regular (4)

Last week's solution

CUBE CRITICAL
U A A E O A
RICH ANALYSIS
R K S K E T T
EGYPTOLOGY
N A E E R G C
CURARE BARREL
Y D T S P A E
COCKCHAFER
S N R I Y F I
CRETONNE HIGH
A A U N T E
BIRDSEYE VIEW

Bridge Zia Mahmood

I'VE just returned from my annual trip to the Biarritz Bridge Festival, a must if you like bridge, beaches, or just a relaxing holiday. True, the chance that it will rain is pretty high, but if you can arrange to be playing bridge while the rain is falling, you need miss none of the attractions of this fabulous resort.

The festival starts with a leisurely teams event. This is followed by the bridge equivalent of self-flagellation, the dreaded Individual tournament, where you play one hand with as many different partners as time permits. It doesn't matter how well you play: sooner or later, disaster is bound to strike. I was making reasonable progress when the sky fell in on me. Look at my hand as South:

♠K962 ♥AK2 ♦A ♣J9872

Partner opened the bidding with one club, and East overcalled one diamond. We were playing the "Standard French" system, in which a one-club opening is often a three-card suit, so it would be premature to support clubs immediately. I bid a simple one spade, and West joined in with two hearts. This was passed back to me, which was a little awkward, since I still did not know if North had any club length. I temporised with three hearts, but that got me only three spades from North. Well, that was something — at least he had support for my suit. Now, if only I had support for his . . .

I jumped to six clubs, hoping for the best. Partner had the hand I'd been dreaming about:

♠QJ3 ♥86 ♦543 ♣AKQ103

As you can see, six clubs was an excellent contract that was due to make, earning us a fine score. But partner was not content with his club suit, although I had raised him to a slam. "You play them so much better than I!" he said, as he converted to six spades. That may have been so, but even I could not see where 12 tricks would come from in a 4-3 spade fit, especially when West doubled it! So I converted to six no trumps, which might not be much better, but could scarcely be worse. West doubled again, and I surveyed a grim prospect (see table).

Luckily, West led the queen of hearts, rather than a diamond. I won with the ace and ran the nine of spades, given the clue to this play by West's double of six spades. When it held, I was up to 11 tricks. I

	North ♠QJ3 ♥86 ♦543 ♣AKQ103	
West ♠A1054 ♥QJ1097 ♦J86 ♣5		East ♠87 ♥543 ♦KQ109… ♣64
	South ♠K962 ♥AK2 ♦A ♣J9872	

continued spades, West winning the third round to play another heart. Now I cashed the spade and the winners, on which West discarded her remaining hearts in a bizarre attempt to protect the jack of diamonds. East, down to the king and queen of diamonds and the three hearts when the last club was cashed, studied the matter interminably. Then, he discarded a diamond! His astonishment on winning the 13th trick with the three of hearts over my two was matched only by my chagrin — and the spectators' glee as they chanted: "C'est l'Individuel!"

Cash bouncer as cricket is bowled out

Vikram Dodd

THE English Cricket Board has demanded the freedom to sell the rights to televise Test matches to the highest bidder after the UK government announced that cricket, soccer and rugby would be excluded from the planned national academy of sporting excellence.

The Culture Secretary, Chris Smith, said last Sunday that the $160 million academy would concentrate only on Olympic and non-commercial sports. He said present plans for the academy, initiated by John Major as a way of boosting his favourite sports of cricket and football, were in a muddle.

His comments stung Lord MacLaurin, chairman of the English Cricket Board, into calling for the scrapping of regulations that mean England's home Test matches have to be shown on terrestrial television.

He told the BBC that if cricket was to be excluded from the academy, the sport should be removed from the list of events drawn up by Parliament which can not be sold to the highest bidder.

"If the Government are not going to help us through the academy and other things, then fine — just take us off the listed events and allow us to negotiate for ourselves for the benefit of our sport." He added that ministers "can't have their cake and eat it".

Rupert Murdoch's Sky Television has already snatched the rights to televise England's foreign tours from the BBC. The corporation's contract to screen home games runs until 1998.

Rugby Football League chief executive, Maurice Lindsay, said: "To talk about rugby league as a commercial sport is nonsense. It's about time people in the south of England realised that the North is suffering and rugby league most definitely is."

The Football Association said it would continue with plans for its own national centre for football.

Mr Smith said that cricket, rugby and soccer were not in the greatest need of help, though tennis might be included. He said: "What we had to do was get a bit of a grip on the notion of the sports academy and to set in place a very clear idea of what it was going to be for."

Mr Smith plans to announce at the end of next month where the academy will be built — Oxfordshire, Loughborough or Sheffield.

● BSkyB television is to come under scrutiny from David Mellor's football task force over the increasing bills supporters face for watching televised sport. The satellite broadcaster will be among the first targets of the new group as it moves against perceived over-commercialisation of the game. New pricing arrangments, which mean some Sky Sports viewers are in line for annual bills of $570, will be discussed by Mr Mellor's group.

Motorcycling British Grand Prix



Come in No 1 . . . Doohan on his victory lap PHOTO LAURENCE GRIFFITHS

Doohan makes it four in a row

Mac McDiarmid at Donington Park

THE East Midlands has become a happy hunting ground for Australian sportsmen. A fortnight ago at Trent Bridge their cricketers wrapped up the Ashes, and here in Derbyshire last Sunday Brisbane's motorcyclist Mick Doohan secured his fourth consecutive world title with victory in the British Grand Prix.

The win makes him the most successful 500cc rider of the past 25 years, though his victory here was not without a fight.

Doohan began the race leading the championship by 116 points from the Japanese rider Tadayuka Okada, his superiority having been confirmed with his ninth pole position of the year.

Brazil's Alex Barros took the lead initially, Doohan riding with customary caution in fourth. When the 32-year-old Australian hit the front at Redgate Corner on lap two, and the Spaniard Carlos Checa, second fastest in practice, crashed on lap three, the expectation was that Doohan would disappear on his Honda. To the delight of 30,000 fans, Okada had other ideas.

For the next 29 laps rarely more than quarter of a second separated the pair as Okada harried the champion-elect. First Doohan broke Kevin Schwantz's six-year-old lap record, only for Okada to respond in kind. On lap 17 Doohan broke the record once more; again Okada responded, overtaking into Goddard's hairpin but running wide. Unfazed, he outbraked Doohan at the next corner, Redgate, this time making it stick.

Doohan came back at his rival, and with a lap to run he led by 0.225sec. Despite riding his Honda ragged, Okada could not respond, and Doohan punched the air in triumph as he took the flag for the 10th time this season.

Not surprisingly Doohan's talent is in demand, and he confirmed over the weekend that he had received "a very big offer" to switch camps next season. The bid almost certainly comes from Yamaha.

The 250cc race was won by Germany's Ralf Waldmann, while the 18-year-old Valentino Rossi took the honours in the 125cc class.

Football results

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: First division: Charlton 3, Oxford Utd 2; Crewe 2, West Brom 3; Portsmouth 3, Port Vale 1; Reading 0, Swindon 1; Stockport 0, Bury 0; Wolves 0, Sheff Utd 0.

Second division: Bournemth 1, Wigan 0; Brentford 0, Chesterfld 0; Bristol City 2, Blackpool 0; Burnley 0, Gillingham 0, Carlisle United 0, Watford 2, Plymouth 2, Grimsby 2; Preston 2, Millwall 1; Walsall 1, Fulham 1; Wrexham 3, Oldham 1; Wycombe 0, Northampton 0; York 0; Bristol R 1.

Third division: Barnet 1, Exeter 2; Brighton 1, Macclesfld 1; Cambridge United 2, Rotherham 1; Cardiff P, Chester P; Doncaster Rovers 0, Peterboro 5; Hartlepool 3, Colchester 2; Hull 0, Notts Co 3; Lincoln 1, Shrewsbury 0; Rochdale 2, Mansfield 0; Scunthorpe 1, Leyton Orient 0; Torquay United 1, Scarboro 0.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Celtic 1, Dunfrmline 2; Dundee Utd 1, Hibernian 1; Hearts 4, Aberdeen 1; Motherwell 0, St Johnstn 1.

First division: Falkirk 2, Ayr 1; Morton 0, Hamilton 2; Partick 0, Dundee 3; Raith 1, Airdrie 1; St Mirren 2, Stirling A 2.

Second division: Brechin 2, Inverness CT 2; Clyde 1, Forfar 2; East Fife 0, Stenhsmr 3; Livingston 1, Stranraer 0; Queen Sth 2, Clydebank 2.

Third division: Albion 2, Berwick 1; Arbroath 2, E.Stirling 0; Dumbarton 2, Montrose 2; Ross Co 0, Queens Pk 1.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Heat and dust-up

WARWICKSHIRE'S formidable one-day machine powered its way into a fourth NatWest Trophy final in five seasons when the county recorded a 105-run victory over Sussex at Edgbaston. Warwickshire scored a daunting 342 for three in their 60 overs, and when the side went out to field their bowlers took over where their batsmen had left off, dismissing the visitors for 237 with nearly seven overs remaining. The only significant contribution for Sussex came from Mark Newell, who made 79 from 113 balls. South African fast bowler Allan Donald finished with figures of 5-37 as Sussex's last six wickets fell for 115 runs.

Warwickshire's opponents in the final will be Essex, who defeated Glamorgan in an ill-tempered game in sweltering conditions at Chelmsford. Glamorgan set the home side a target of 302 for victory — their 301 for eight owing much to Steve James's 109 from 157 balls.

Essex's Australian opener Stuart Law responded in explosive fashion, plundering 90 runs from 73 balls. Bad light forced the game to be suspended with Essex needing six runs off 41 balls with two wickets standing. But before the proceedings were brought to a halt, Law needed treatment to his hand after being struck by a beamer from Darren Thomas, and the Essex seamer Mark Ilott and Glamorgan's off-spinner Robert Croft were involved in a heated confrontation.

When the match resumed the next day, Essex achieved their target with the loss of another wicket. The bust-up between Ilott and Croft earned them fines of £1,000 each from their respective counties.

MIDDLESEX captain Mark Ramprakash is back on the Test scene after an 18-month absence. He returns to the England fold along with Mark Butcher. Also staging a comeback is Lancashire fast bowler Peter Martin. John Crawley has been dropped and Darren Gough has not recovered from an injury. The full squad is: Atherton, Stewart, Hussain, Butcher, Thorpe, Ramprakash, A Hollioake, B Hollioake, Croft, Caddick, Headley, Martin, Tufnell and Malcolm.

RECORDS are made to be broken, but three athletics world records tumbling in a little over an hour left the 22,000 capacity crowd, many of whom had paid $100 a ticket, gasping for breath at the Zurich Grand Prix. Wilson Boit-Kipketer of Kenya started the ball rolling when he ran 7min 59.08sec to eclipse Moses Kiptanui's mark in the 3,000 metres steeplechase.

The cheer had scarcely died in the throat of the spectators when his near-namesake Wilson Kipketer, the Kenyan-born Dane, broke Sebastian Coe's 800m world record with a run of 1:41.24. The Briton had set the time in Florence in 1981, and it was the longest surviving mark in the book.

And finally Haile Gebrselassie broke his own record in the 5,000m when he ran 12:41.86, the 10th world record of his career. The performance reinforced the Ethiopian's claim as the greatest distance runner ever. Sadly, Gebrselassie was injured in a car crash soon after returning from competing in Switzerland, although his injuries were said to be only minor.

Another British record to fall at the Zurich meeting was Steve Cram's 12-year-old European 1,500m mark of 3:29.67. It was beaten by Spain's former Olympic champion Fermin Cacho, who won in 3:28.95.

THE United States snatched yachting's Admiral's Cup from under the noses of the Italians. Within five miles of the finishing line and in the lightest of breezes, John Kolius and the crew of MK Cafe produced a dramatic climax to the Fastnet Race as they charged from sixth to second in the ILC-40 class while Italy's Brava Q8 dropped from first to sixth. The 36-point reversal saw the Italians fall to third overall, behind Germany but ahead of Australia and Britain. Italy had appeared poised for glory after Madina Milano crossed the line ahead of the American Flash Gordon 3 in the Big Boat class.